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## CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

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S. G. SIMPKINS, COURT-ST. BOSTON.

Is now publishing under the direction of the 'Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Piety and Charity,' a series of books with the above title. Each volume will be complete of itself, and all of uniform size and binding, and afforded at a low price.

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**VOL. V.**—Meditations for the Afflicted, Sick and Dying.





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MEDITATIONS

FOR THE

AFFLICTED, SICK AND DYING!

by  
Charles Lowell

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BOSTON.

SAMUEL G. SIMPKINS.

1833.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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The *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Piety and Charity*, under whose auspices the present volume is published, has not aimed, in its publications, at novelty. Most of its volumes—and they have found favor in the religious community—have been selected from works of merit already in print. Nor has it confined its selection to any particular set of theologians. Its object has been a practical one, and it has not discarded a work adapted to promote piety, because it contained some views of theology not in accordance with its own.

The present volume is extracted, chiefly, from a work published at 'Edinburgh, and but little known here, entitled *Farewell to Time, or Last Views of Life, and Prospects of Immortality.*'

The editor is persuaded that it will be acceptable to the serious reader, although it may not in all respects agree with its author and that, especially, it will be found a comforting and instructive companion—in the hours of solitude—to the afflicted, sick and dying.

C. L.

*Boston, August 1833.*

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MEDITATIONS  
FOR THE  
AFFLICTED, SICK AND DYING.

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I.

THE PARENTAL GOODNESS OF GOD.

Matt. vi. 9. *Our Father which art in heaven.*

The idea of the 'Parental goodness of God,' implies that we are at all moments under the care of a Being, who by all his previous dispensations, has shown himself to be actuated only by a desire to promote our welfare,—a Being, from whose munificent goodness we received the nature which distinguishes us, and our situation amidst the wonderful universe in which our lot is cast,—who has constantly followed us, during our progress of life, with loving kindness and tender mercy,—and to whom,

indeed, even amidst the wreck of all other sources of enjoyment, the heart of man still feels that it can commit itself with security, as into the hands of a Being, who can have no purpose in view for it, even by his apparently severest dealings, but the eventual establishment of its best and most permanent happiness.

There is something, indeed, in the highest degree striking and instructive in the thought, that God has so drawn the heart of man to himself, and so incorporated the evidence of his fatherly disposition with the events which he has ordained as the portion of all the children of men, that it is not possible for even the most afflicted of his creatures to look back upon all the way in which he has been led, without feeling, that the Being who gave him his place in existence is still his best friend, amidst all the disasters which that existence may have brought with it,—that, indeed, we are secure of eventual good, whenever we are conscious that, even amidst the loss of all temporal comforts, we can, with true purpose of heart, commit all our concerns for time and for eternity to his hands,—and that the lowest state of destitution, and of mental perversion, accordingly, into which any rational creature can fall, is that

## AFFLICTED, SICK AND DYING.

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of entertaining a doubt respecting the friendly dispositions of the Being who created him, in conceiving that the goodness which has abundantly blessed all other creatures has been turned, in his particular case, into enmity and malice.

It is consolatory to think, that God has taken care of the hearts of his creatures, and that this suspicion is never seriously entertained while the common powers and feelings of man nature remain in their ordinary and sane state,—and the first idea, accordingly, which should be awakened in the minds of the afflicted or dying, is that of the evidence which the care of Divine Providence affords, that we are at all moments in the hands of a Being who wishes that all his creatures should consider him as their Father and Friend,—and who occasionally calls them to a severer trial of their confidence, that he may eventually manifest to them more abundant tokens of his parental kindness.

## II.

THAT THE PLAN OF PROVIDENCE, IN SO FAR AS WE CAN TRACE IT, IS THAT OF BRINGING GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

Rom. viii. 28. *All things work together for good.*

It would be consolatory only to know that goodness and tender mercy have characterized the more prominent features of that scheme amidst which we find ourselves placed—but our security and comfort must be incalculably increased, when, upon a nearer survey of life we perceive that kindness has characterized even those parts of the Divine dispensation that to us seemed, at the time of their occurrence, to be most dark and unaccountable—and that thus, so far from being exceptions to the general scheme, they but evince, when properly estimated, the boundless beneficence and complete unity of design by which the entire system of the Divine government is pervaded.

Thus the sorrows and hardships of our youthful years only prepared us for the honor and happiness of more advanced life—sufferings which tried our maturer strength to the uttermost, and the purpose of which seemed to

be covered from our view, at the time, by a veil of mystery, have, in every instance, been perceived—if we have had sufficient experience of their effects—to have had some good and wise connexion with important portions of our history which were afterwards to be evolved—and we have thus learnt, or might have learnt, as we advanced in life, that our own murmurings have been, in every instance, but proofs of our own folly—and that nothing could have been more hurtful to us than to have had our wishes granted, in any of the instances, in which the Father of our spirits seemed to have been dealing most severely with us.

The severest trials, indeed, which life presents will always be found, when duly improved, to have terminated,—and to have been intended to terminate,—in the most important blessings;—and it would surely argue a culpable distrust of Providence, to suppose, that a different plan will be found to have characterized the including scheme of the Divine dispensation towards us, from that which has marked all its previous parts—that the merciful hand which has so wisely and graciously led us through all the preceding steps of our mortal journey, will cease to guide and to support us, at that moment, *when our strength is weakest, and our*

need of its guidance is most urgent—or that we have not reason to believe, that as God has seen fit to call his creatures to their severest conflict, when life is drawing to a close, it is only because he intends—if we pass well through our trial—eventually to bless us, by some grander manifestation of his providential love, than any that has marked our progress during our sojourn amidst the varied but imperfect scenes of that world we are so unwilling to leave.

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### III.

**MERCIFUL CHARACTER OF GOD—MORE ESPECIALLY AS THAT CHARACTER HAS BEEN REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL.**

*Matt. xxii. 2. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.*

Man is born not only to sorrow but to sin—and no individual, accordingly, can look back upon life, without feeling that he has failed, in many respects, to do that which he ought to have done—that he has also been guilty of many positive, and, perhaps, of some great violations of the *divine law*—that, at any rate, the progress of

as been to him, from the experience of  
 failures, a sad series of humiliations  
 fears—and that, in bidding adieu to life,  
 entering upon the untried scenes of eterni-  
 greatest anxiety is, what he shall an-  
 God for all the deeds that have marked  
 e, or what atonement he can plead for  
 constant failures of which he has been

It is, however, when the mind is agitated  
 ch thoughts, that it becomes most sensi-  
 the peculiar adaptation of that revelation,  
 has been made in the Gospel to the deep-  
 nts and fears of the human heart,—for  
 stinctive character of the Gospel is, that  
 proclamation, on the part of Heaven, of  
 and forgiveness to those who have of-  
 l, but who have become conscious of  
 offences, and are willing to lay hold  
 hope that has been set before them—  
 e never properly understand the true ex-  
 ce of Christianity, till we have thus learnt  
 ard it as the sweet and cheering voice of  
 compassion diffused over a world, all the  
 tants of which feel within themselves the  
 ousness of guilt, and have all their hopes  
 d by this baleful sentiment.  
*More particularly the Gospel has substan-*



tiated this message, by announcing to us the appearance upon this earth, and in the nature of man, of one who bore the title of the best-beloved of the sons of God—and who came among us ‘full of grace and truth,’—to proclaim the forgiveness and tender pity of God, to be, in his own person, an evidence of the disposition of the Father who sent him to fulfil the terms of that message which he was empowered to deliver—and at last to offer up himself a sacrifice for sin *that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.*

3. Still farther, that the value and importance of this message might be made known, in all coming times, this beloved son of God appointed institutions, and consecrated an order of men to be standing memorials of his love to all the generations that were yet to come forth—he thus represented that new dispensation which he came to introduce as a ‘marriage’ prepared by the eternal King in honor of his Son—and to which men of all countries and of all times were to be invited;—and when, accordingly, in any age of the existence of Christianity, men come to its ordinances, or partake of its privileges, they give evidence by so doing, if they rightly understand the *meaning of the action* they are performing, of the

se which they entertain of their need of  
don—and of the fine provision which has  
n made, in the Gospel, for supplying this  
t urgent and momentous of all the wants  
which humanity is afflicted.

. It is, lastly, the beautiful representation  
Christianity, upon this subject, ‘that there  
oy in heaven when a sinner repenteth’—  
that the best image we can form of the  
ler pity of God, is that of a father rejoicing  
r the return of a son who had gone astray  
a duty, but who had at last seen the error  
is ways, and returned with sincere contri-  
, saying, ‘Father, I have sinned against  
aven, and in thy sight, and am no more  
thy to be called thy thy son.’

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#### IV.

ORTANT LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE  
ERSONAL HISTORY OF CHRIST.

ppians ii. 8. *He humbled himself, and became  
edient unto death, even the death of the cross.  
herefore God also hath highly exalted him.*

The first thing which strikes us, when  
compare the dignity of Christ and the gran-

deur of his office, with the plan of life that was marked out for him by Providence, is, that his life was, generally, one of great humiliation and of much oppressive suffering;—it, certainly, was not such a plan of life, as was either anticipated by those to whom the promise of his coming had been given, or would, in all probability, have been conceived, by even the wisest of mankind, who might have speculated on the possibility of such a manifestation of divine condescension being made to our race;—but after it has been revealed as having actually taken place, we can see the most beautiful accommodation in it to the wants of a race of beings who are doomed, by the very nature which they inherit, to labor and sorrow—and more especially the afflicted and the dying may derive much consolation, from reflecting, that if God saw proper to subject him, who came as the best beloved of his sons into this world, to such a course of humiliation and of grief, there is no reason why we should consider ourselves as abandoned by Providence, because our lot in life may render it necessary for us to pass through a similar series of afflictions and privations. Christ, says the inspired writer, was considered, because of his sorrows *'as stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted'*

et so far was all this from being any proof of his displeasure of his Father, that it was only because he was to fulfil the highest of all missions to the human race, that God thus saw fit to make him 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.'

2. Besides, however, this general character of the life of Christ, it is to be considered, that when he was about to complete his sacrifice of obedience to the Divine will, he was exposed to an affliction of peculiar severity, being as the sacred writer has characterized it, 'in agony,' so that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground—and in prayer he prayed, saying 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me—nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.'

Indeed, the life of Christ, without this awful endurance, would not have been so perfect a representation of that course through which every partaker of human nature has been ordained to pass—for it has not only been appointed for all men once to die, but, in the ordinary course of Providence, the period of our departure from life is preceded by greater and more continued afflictions than had marked any of its preceding portions—and the 'agony' of our Lord *may thus be considered as a part of*

his mortal history corresponding with which every heir of mortality has also a counter. This, then, is a portion of our Saviour's history which ought, especially, to commend itself to the study of the sick—ing—and, in no part of his history, does the perfect beauty of his example shine forth with more engaging lustre. For his first trial was made evident during this sore trial, was the perfect submission, with which, and his peculiar sensibility to his sufferings, he submitted to the righteous appointment of his Father, saying, 'O my Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me—nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.' In this place, his conduct, during the same scene, was marked by the most forgiveness to the weakness of those who ministered to his sorrows, but who failed to wish, from the heaviness of the trial, the preternatural darkness of that hour—read, that when he found the disciples who attended him to the scene of his agonizing, powered by sleep, he only apologized for their weakness in these compassionate words: 'My spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

The first duty of the sick, and the first duty, *then, in imitation of this example, is sub*

amidst the severest trials, to the perfect  
 om of that Being, who has appointed them  
 trial—or, in the words of our blessed Lord  
 self, who has put into their hands the 'cup'  
 has been given them to drink—and every  
 istian ought to be prepared, when thus tried to  
 uttermost, to say, Heavenly Father, not  
 will, but thine be done.'—Along with this  
 signation to God, we ought also to show all  
 gentleness and forbearance to those who wish  
 minister to our relief, but who may not, at  
 times, be able to satisfy the demand, which  
 or sense of suffering may induce us to make  
 them. Indeed, a broken spirit, and a ruin-  
 ed frame, are not easily satisfied with any atten-  
 tions which friends can show,—and we ought  
 t, therefore, like our blessed Lord, to be pre-  
 pared, by previous habits of gentleness and  
 forbearance, to say, when we are most disap-  
 pointed in our expectations of comfort from the  
 attentions of our friends,—'The spirit, indeed,  
 willing, but the flesh is weak.'—Meek resig-  
 nation to the will of God, and a gentle and for-  
 bearing conduct to those around us, are among  
 the virtues best suited to a death-bed—and  
 were unquestionably meant to be recommend-  
 ed to us as so suited, by having shone, with  
*such beautiful lustre, in the great 'agony' of*

him, who did, in all things, that which was 'well pleasing in the sight of God.'

3. Still further, it was part of the plan of Providence, with respect to Christ, not only that he should suffer,—even unto death,—but that he should *voluntarily* advance to this last trial of his obedience, in the pursuit of a great object which had been marked out for him by God. It has accordingly been significantly said by the Evangelist, that 'Jesus, knowing that all things had now been fulfilled' which it was necessary for him to suffer previous to his death, 'set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem—and that as he went up, he took his disciples apart by the way, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed at the hands of men—and they shall mock, and scourge, and crucify him—and the third day he shall rise again.'

Now it was because Christ *voluntarily* met death—a public, a painful, and an accursed death—in that course of duty on which, as the servant of God, he had been sent—and because he was not deterred from the fulfilment of his mission by the prospect, which he distinctly foresaw, of all the sorrow and all the shame that were about to fall on him,—it was because he was thus faithful, even unto the 'accursed

death of the cross,' that God also, after he had humbled him to the uttermost, made this course of humiliation but the path to him of more transcendent honors than had ever been conferred on any other partaker of human nature—for, on this account, says the sacred writer, 'God also raised him from the dead,'—and called him visibly unto his kingdom,—and 'set him at his own right hand,'—and made him 'the head over all things to the church,'—and has finally constituted him the judge by whom the sentence, of approbation or of condemnation, is to be pronounced upon all who have lived, according to the deeds done by them in the body, 'whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil.'

And all this was done—all this glory and honor followed the voluntary humiliation and steadfastness, even unto death, of Christ, the pattern of all obedience to men, to instruct us, that our suffering of death shall also be followed, if we encounter the last enemy with fortitude, by a corresponding weight of glory—or that to those who have been faithful not only in life, but through death, their last humiliation is only introductory to such scenes of glory, and of triumph, as 'the eye of man hath never



seen, nor his ear heard, nor his imagination capable of receiving.'

So truly beautiful and full of interest are lessons conveyed to all men,—and especially to those who are about to depart from life,—the events which composed the personal history of our Lord—and so true is it, that these lessons altogether form a grand moral picture—illustrative of the entire destiny of man which was still more above the conceptions of the humble individuals by whom his life has been recorded, than even the matchless outlines which their artless writings convey of the features of a *character*, which has justly entitled him who bore it, to be the model of all excellence to the human race.

## V.

**ADAPTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE RESPECTING THE INTERPOSITION OF CHRIST TO SOME NATURAL SENTIMENTS OF THE HUMAN HEART.**

**Heb. ii. 14.** *Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.*

**John i. 29.** *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.*

**1 Cor. xv. 20.** *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them who slept.*

**Heb. iv. 15.** *We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities*

**John v. 22.** *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*

1. In the first place, we anxiously wish that some visible token should be given to us of the paternal love with which the everlasting Father continues to regard the inhabitants of this world, —and that though to us he is invisible, and we cannot see God and live, he would yet grant us such a manifestation of his condescending grace as is suited to our nature, and to the condition of creatures who are, in some measure, capable of tracing in the works of creation the proofs of his existence. Now, to satisfy thi

natural desire, Christ has been revealed to us, as the Image of the invisible God, as 'God manifested in the flesh,'—and every Christian, accordingly, when he is laid upon that bed from which he is to rise no more, may derive invaluable consolation, simply from recollecting, that 'Christ was made bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,'—that 'God sent his Son in the likeness of man,'—and that that Son 'pitched his tent among us, not in the nature of angels, but as one of the seed of Abraham,' to afford a visible pledge of the continued love of our Father who is in heaven.

2. There is also a natural wish in the human heart to present some atonement unto God for the evils which it has done,—and, accordingly, we find mankind in every age of their existence, and almost in every country which they have occupied, giving evidence of the existence of this desire, by approaching the altars of their peculiar worship with some consecrated offerings of penitence and hope. It satisfies this desire, that Christ is revealed, in the Gospel, as the 'Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world,' and that when, therefore, we are oppressed with a sense of guilt, we are authorized to look unto this once offering up of

or blemish,'—and to believe that it has been a sacrifice 'of a sweet-smelling savor' in the sight of God.

3. We further feel a natural wish to approach the Invisible Author of all good, by means of some Mediator, who is allied to our weakness, by having been a participator of the nature which we inherit,—and it is, accordingly, the beautiful representation of Scripture on this subject, that Christ has been made, for his humiliation unto death, the grand Dispenser of Divine bounty to that race of beings whose nature he honored by having once borne it as his own,—that we have thus not 'an High-Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but one who was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin,'—and that, through his intercession, we may now 'come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy to pardon, and grace to help us, in our time of need.'

4. We naturally wish, in the last place, as beings who have an account to render of all the deeds done in the body, that our sentence should be pronounced by One who is acquainted, from his own experience, with all the weakness and temptations of our lot,—and to whom we may *at once* appeal as a righteous Dispen-

## MEDITATIONS FOR THE

of the awards of justice, and a sympathiser with the frailties of our frailty accordingly, to satisfy this natural desire: it has been said in Scripture, that 'neither judgeth no man, but hath commended judgment unto the Son,'—that mercy and judgment will be mingled with judgment as far as that mercy can be extended consistently with the righteous administration of justice, and that while the punishment of the wicked shall be augmented by the very circumstance of its having been awarded by one who died that they might be saved from sin, the exaltation of the righteous shall be enhanced by being partaken of with them 'all power in heaven and on earth committed,'—and who is destined to be conformed to their human nature, even to suffer for them, as his Redeemed, in the glory prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

So full of consolation to our most precious desires and wishes are the grand peculiarities of the christian faith,—when these peculiarities are rightly interpreted,—and so well understood, especially, are those who have the prospect of giving account unto God of the deeds done by them in the body, to val-

## AFFLICTED, SICK AND DYING.

revelation of Christianity as the most blessing of all gifts unto men,—and, from the bottom of their hearts, to thank God, that he has thus in Christ, made them ‘partakers of divine consolation and of good hope through grace.’

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### VI.

CONSOLATION THAT MAY BE DERIVED FROM THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST, AND FROM THE RECOLLECTION OF HIS PAST DEALINGS WITH THEM.

*Philippians i. 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ.*

It is not the purpose of Divine Providence, in any instance, to destroy but to cherish that which is good in the human heart,—even when that good exists in the smallest measure,—and, may be, in conjunction with much that is of different character. It is, on this account, that God has revealed himself not only as a Being who passeth by iniquity, and is not strict to take vengeance for sin,—but as a being who is disposed to favor and to support, by the aid of his Spirit, every good inclination or submis-

sive purpose which the heart of man, amid its feebleness and errors, may be disposed to entertain,—and from this consideration of fostering and directing care of Divine Providence, the afflicted may derive the purest consolation, amidst sorrows, which, otherwise might tempt them to think that they had been abandoned by God.

1. For, in the first place, on looking upon life, the afflicted must be aware, that they have often been times, when a dark cloud seemed to overhang the way, in which it was their purpose to have proceeded,—when circumstances seemed to thicken around them, to entangle them on every side,—and when they knew not what course to take, that they might most securely attain to the end which they had purposed. But they must also be aware, that, in all such moments, their true wisdom and best security lie in committing their way, with implicit trust, to the good counsel of God,—in waiting, with an observant but humble and obedient mind, for those *hints* which the course of his Providence might furnish respecting the path it was most for their welfare to take,—and in not doubting, that if thus committed the issue of their ways to him, he would finally lead them to that which

was right. Now, this patient waiting for the *directing* Providence of God, they must at the same time recollect, never failed to be eventually blessed,—or that the courses of Divine Providence were imperceptibly so shaped as to bring them from darkness into perfect light,—and give them reason to bless God that he ‘had established their feet, and brought them from the miry clay,’—and shed a clear and beautiful light all around their paths. And, if God thus never failed to guide them by the courses of his Providence, and the operations of his Spirit, during the previous portions of their journey, surely, they have no reason to think, that he means to desert them when they are arrived at that point where their darkness is greatest, and their uncertainty most perplexing,—when they are passing through the ‘valley of the shadow of death,’—and when, therefore, more than during any preceding part of their journey, it is necessary that ‘his Spirit should guide them,’—‘that his rod and staff should support them.’

2. There have been other times when the progress of life has seemed to present to the afflicted a different aspect,—times, when they cannot but recollect, that amidst health, and *warm hopes, and earnest desires, they had dis-*



tinctly marked out for themselves the path which they believed to be most for their interest to pursue,—but when, also, the Providence of God seemed to delight in *thwarting* all their schemes,—and in leading them, contrary to their own wishes and their own perceptions of what was useful for them, into other courses of activity or of trial. And however much they may have regretted such hindrances at the time of their occurrence,—however hard they may have imagined the conduct of Divine Providence towards them to be,—they must also recollect, that the progress of events never failed to satisfy them, that they had really mistaken the course that was most suited to their welfare,—that God, whose good Providence never utterly forsakes those who trust in him, had chosen infinitely better for them, than they had done for themselves,—and that he was, indeed, giving them the highest proofs of his care at the very moment, and by the very means, which they had considered as most ominous of their ruin. And, if God thus overruled their short-sightedness,—and thwarted their foolish schemes,—only to do them good, in the past courses of his Providence,—surely, it is ingratitude, and want of true wisdom to believe, that in calling them into trouble at the termina-

of life, and seeming to break up all their plans, and forcibly to lead them into difficulty,—he has a purpose different from that which has characterized all the parts of his merciful and good conduct towards them;—it is surely not only more for their happiness, but a better proof of true wisdom in them to believe, that this apparent breaking up of all their present enjoyments and pleasures, is only preparatory to some signal dispensation of that infinite wisdom and love by which all the parts of the dispensations have been pervaded,—and to have confidence and belief to commit themselves, with fearlessness, to the ultimate issues of that dispensation, which will not fail, if they are not false to themselves, eventually to lead them to that perfect day.’

Still further, in looking back upon life, the afflicted cannot but recollect, that not only were there a pure joy of the heart connected with the indulgence of all christian graces—of those graces that seem to be most hurtful to man—such as patience,—forbearance,—self-denial,—and contrition,—and that the afflicted ought to be regarded as an earnest and anxious seeker of that perfect happiness with which, in the latter and more enduring state of being,

higher measures of purity are to be rewarded,—but more particularly, that the good affections, and submissive purposes, and holy aspirations which they cherished in time,—and it may be in seasons of difficulty and of darkness,—never failed eventually to lead to their appropriate reward when the counsel of Providence had reached its accomplishment, and present obstacles had gradually disappeared. It is, indeed, true, that God often calls men thus to ‘sow in tears,’ when he intends that they should ‘reap in joy,’—or, that he shows them the *duty* of exercising many graces and virtues, while, amidst severe distress, and a dark overclouding of all their prospects, they can see *only the duty* of such conduct, without being able to trace any good consequences, to which such purifying of their affections, and establishing of these purposes, on their part, is likely to lead. But though they may have been unable to perceive these issues of their conduct, it has not been the less true, that God has never overlooked, or failed to mark down in his book of remembrance, even the most secret of their purposes, and the least observed of their tears,—that, on the contrary, those private exercises of a pure or contrite heart, from which they least expected any important results, and which they cher

ished, solely, from a sense of the *duty* which they owed to God, have frequently been those very parts of their conduct from which they have afterwards been able to trace the most important consequences,—and that God has, thus, seemed to teach them in the most impressive and pleasing of all ways,—not only that his eye is at all moments marking the most secret movements of their hearts,—but that it is part of his plan, eventually, to give full effect, though it may be at a time, and by a series of means, which human foresight is unable to anticipate, to every thing that man does, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

And, surely, if we have found our virtues as well as our vices thus producing their appropriate fruits in all past times,—and even when at the moment of their exercise they seemed least likely to lead to any desirable results,—we ought not to doubt, that whatever good purposes,—or holy aspirations,—or secret feelings of contrition may occupy our hearts,—during those least propitious of all hours,—when sore anguish of body and of mind announce to us that the termination of all our earthly plans is at hand,—will also lead to some results, though our eye cannot now perceive their connexion, —or that the kindly breath which has fostered

and brought to maturity our most secret desires in time, will not be denied to us, when on the verge of an eternal world, we are given by the earnest exercise of the same graces, the last testimony of our obedience to the will of God.

In short, if we are conscious, that during a part of our lives which is past, God has, in some measure, been carrying on a good work in us, we ought not to doubt, that he who has thus wrought in us, will not leave his purpose without its due accomplishment,—and that, though we may not, amidst sore distress, and all disheartening and darkening circumstances, in which the near prospect of death is attended, be able to trace the operation of his Spirit, in bettering our hearts, and in carrying on that work which we fancied to have been begun, that work is not the less, on that account, actually in progress, and God will in his good time, perfect that which concerneth

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And these convictions,—and these retrospective views of life, and of the past conduct of *vine* Providence towards us, are the more to be indulged,—in sickness and death, because

sometimes happens that the sufferings which precede dissolution, are of a kind which seem rather fitted to pervert, and to harden, and to break in the heart, than to give it that kindly and purifying discipline which, to us, seems the best preparation for our future condition. There are indeed, troubles which humble, and purify our affections, and gradually release our hold of every thing on earth,—and inspire us with the best desires after a better state of being,—thus prepare the soul for bidding a calm and triumphant farewell to every thing on earth, from a pleasing anticipation that its earthly trials are but preparatory to its entrance on ‘an eternal weight of glory.’ And these troubles, when accompanied with such effects, are no doubt among the greatest blessings that can be given to men in this world,—preparing death under an aspect peculiarly beautiful, and forming altogether such an assemblage of circumstances as every man would wish to characterize the last hours of his own connexion with time.

But it is not thus that God often deals even with those whom he most loves, and on whom he intends to bestow his choicest blessings. Sometimes, irritation of mind and of body, continued for long months or years, deny to

the sufferer any exercise of those calm affections which seem to us so beautiful as earnestness of the rest that remains for the people of God;—often, the body is tried with sore pain, —and wearisome months and days are appointed unto man before he is released from his trial,—when he lies down, he says, ‘Oh that it were morning,’—and when he rises up, he seems to himself as but a mark against which the fierce arrows of the wrath of God are directed,—and thus while other men are running their race with joy,—and multitudes, even of the dying, are meeting their last hours with composure, and looking forward to death with pleasing expectation,—his lot seems to be the endurance of sorrows, which have a tendency only to lessen him in his own estimation,—and to blunt, or lower, or pervert whatever parts of his nature seemed to him most excellent, or most fitted to offer by their cultivation an earnest of his title to the ‘inheritance of the just made perfect.’ On these accounts the sufferer may sometimes be disposed to think that God has, indeed, set him as a mark for his fierce arrows,—and that, as he has no hope of deliverance in this world, he has no right to expect that even his release from the sufferings of *time*, shall find his spirit prepared, by any thing

*it has undergone during its last hours, for entering on that 'rest which remains for the children of God.'*

These, however, are thoughts in which the afflicted may be greatly mistaken,—and it is in the proper management of such cases that the excellence and value of an enlightened comforter of the afflicted may be perceived. To those, then, who are oppressed by such thoughts, and are overwhelmed by the endurance of such calamities, it may safely be represented, by the conscientious and discreet minister of Christ,—in the first place—That the very best of men have met death amidst sufferings similar to those which now awaken all their fears, and, it may be, overwhelm them with despair,—that even the Beloved Son of God, when he appeared as the Representative of human nature, endured such sorrows before his decease, as made him in the anticipation of prophecy, cry out, 'Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow,'—his death, indeed, was not only painful and humiliating, but was enhanced in its misery by the scorn and indignation of those who witnessed his sorrows,—so that he seemed to be a man, 'stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,'—*even his own words, while enduring such sorrow*



were these very remarkable ones, 'My God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?'—we are entitled to believe that God thus seem to set him as the mark of his displeasure, instruct all future partakers of human nature that if his Beloved Son was thus humbled and brought low, in his utmost need, we have reason to conclude, merely from the severity of the trials amidst which our departure from life takes place, that, on that account, we have not been deserted by the love, or by the favorable providence of God.

It ought, secondly, to be represented to those who are suffering under peculiar humiliations, that God has purposes in view, by these trials, which we are incapable, in any instance, of fully comprehending,—that his plan, in the history of the world, embraces events that are far removed from our present sphere of observation, and relations of our destiny to that of other beings with whose existence even we are unacquainted,—so that there may be a preparation going forward, with respect to us, in our apparently most humiliating sorrows, for such scenes and such future connexions of our immortal career as will far more than compensate to us for our present distresses,—and may even show th

to have been transcendent proofs of the peculiar favor of God.

In the third place, it may be represented to such sufferers, that we are very imperfect judges of our own characters, and often pronounce that to be beneficial for us which is really hurtful,—and that to be evil, which if we better knew our own hearts, we should own to be good,—so that while God seems to us, by our sufferings, to be only destroying what was good and noble in our nature, he may, in reality, be only rooting out vices of which we were not sufficiently aware,—or awakening virtues of humility and submission, which constituted our chief wants, as beings destined 'to be made perfect.'

Lastly, and above all, it ought to be represented to such humiliated sufferers,—that if they are conscious that goodness and mercy have followed them during all the previous portions of their abode upon this earth,—that God has uniformly shown himself to them as a Being who delights to bring good out of evil,—and especially, if they are conscious that the spirit of God, by the dispensations of his Providence, has been working with their spirits in those calmer, and, as they think, better days, to which they now look back with desire, they

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life, are marked by the endurance of sufferings of a peculiarly painful kind,—and which try to the uttermost the powers of endurance with which our nature is gifted. It is, indeed, often oppressive to the feelings even of those who only witness the trial, to observe how hardly the best of men seem thus, during their last hours, to be dealt with,—and, hence, it becomes a great duty to communicate to the sufferers, such views as are fitted to sustain, in so far as human nature, amidst cruel torments, can be sustained, the hearts of those, on whom the hand of Providence is thus heavily laid.

With this view, then, the afflicted ought to endeavor to keep in mind, that during the continuance of our pains, our most secret and evanescent parts are perfectly known unto God,—as well as the manner in which we conduct ourselves during their continuance,—so that even in the dark and silent watches of the night, when no eye of man is awake to notice our agonies, there is not a pang that wrings our hearts, nor a pain in the finest fibre of our frame, that is not marked by that Omniscient eye, which 'never slumbers nor sleeps. Our sorrows and pains, indeed, often seem to ourselves to come and to depart without any *counsel or purpose*,—and on this account th

appear to us, not unfrequently, too  
be borne,—but we may rest assured th  
part of our distress is well known unto  
and that he will, in his own good time  
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ity under which we are suffering.

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time and way of bringing our trial to a  
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can be finished, when the whole extent o  
tory, and all the purposes of our trial,  
en into account,—and that it is only  
we cannot thus extend our view to all  
of our existence, and relations of our en  
that we presume to dictate unto God  
should do for us,—or in what time  
our affliction should be removed.

In many cases, these considerations  
*ly and habitually actuating the mind,*

ble the sufferer to support himself with patience amidst trials which, to those who witness them, may seem too strong or too long continued for flesh and blood,—and he who, amidst such sufferings feels himself so strengthened by God, ought to accept such consolation as a token of good, and devoutly to pour forth his thanksgivings for so signal a favor.

But there are pains too violent and too irritating to be subdued even by such thoughts, and when 'the spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak,' the sufferer ought not to be too much cast down, or to despair of final favor, though he should not be able to realize, in his conduct, that calmness of endurance which, with a trial more proportioned to his strength, it would be his happiness and pride to display.

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### VIII.

CONSIDERATIONS CALCULATED TO PRODUCE SUBMISSION AS TO THE TIME OF OUR DEPARTURE.

*Job vii. 1. Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?*

There are various delusive thoughts, which the self-love of men is apt to suggest to them,

as reasons why their existence upon this earth should be continued, beyond the term which Divine Providence, by the infliction of deadly disease, seems to have set to it in their individual cases.

In the *first* place, they seem about to be cut off before the number of the days that have been allotted unto man have been accomplished,—and it appears to them a hard thing that they should thus be doomed to perish, it may be, in the midst of their years. But it ought to be kept in mind by the sick, that as there was a set time for our coming into life, so is there a critical moment for our departure from this world, that we may enter upon a future and invisible scene, at the precise time, when the arrangements of divine Providence for our appearance on that scene shall be most favorable for our admission into it. It is also a part of the plan of Providence, in his dealings with men, that they should depart from this world at all stages of their progress through it,—so that, while the greater number die in early life, or in the midst of their days, but a small portion are permitted to see the three score and ten years which make up the extreme course of our days; and God has kept in his own hand, at what

lar point of our progress the journey of individual is to terminate. Indeed, it has strikingly remarked, that so much is there sovereignty, on the part of God in this portion of his dealings with men,—and so earnestly do they seem bent on keeping their minds occupied by the uncertainty of their days,—that he calls men away from life in the very midst of those schemes on which their earthly happiness had been most set,—or, it may be, when they were about to enter on their last and greatest project, and when, by its accomplishment they expected to have crowned all their labors with success.

In the *second* place, men often think that they could yet do much good to mankind,—or are instrumental in giving a greater extension to the kingdom of God upon earth,—and they thus delude themselves with the belief, that their own fancied importance of their labors, will still find need of their services in his kingdom.

This, however, proceeds from an exaggerated opinion which men are apt to form of their own importance in the divine kingdom.—It ought also to be kept in mind, even by him who seems to have most reason for indulging



such thoughts, that God has an infinity of instruments at his disposal, for the accomplishment of his purposes; that the earth will be forsaken though we should be taken away, but, that as God saw fit to raise us to the place which we have occupied, and to do the portion of service which we have already done, the same Almighty power can call other servants into his vineyard, who may be endowed with equal or with greater powers for the production of good.—And still farther, it ought to be kept in mind by us, that, if we really feel the ambition of being useful servants of God, and are not rather deluding ourselves by our own self-love and weak fears, while we but fancy that our ambition is of a more exalted kind, God can provide us with more extensive means of promoting the interests of his universal kingdom, in some greater portion of his boundless empire,—or that, in heaven, there will be abundant opportunities, and, indeed, far greater and more extensive opportunities than we now enjoy, for the accomplishment of whatever good we are capable of doing to the grand interests of the moral dominions of God, with which we cannot cease to be connected—and where those who have faithfully employ-

five talents intrusted to them in time, made the rulers over five cities.'

The same delusive spirit, men often exert an anxious wish to live, that they may see the progress of the divine dispensation upon earth, and be gratified by the completion of the success of those schemes, the origination or progress of which, it may be said, have already taken a sincere and deep interest.

But surely, the kingdom of God and his dispensations are not limited to those comparatively perfect disclosures of them that are made, but to be going forward upon this earth.

On the contrary, the divine kingdom is one comprehensive scheme, extending, under different manifestations of it, throughout all space and all time,—and those who have loved to see the progress of the kingdom of God upon this earth, and have done well the part assigned them, in promoting the interests of that kingdom, shall only be admitted, when they have directed their eyes upon all temporal arrangements, to a far grander and more extensive scheme, those wise, and good, and beautiful dispensations, which, as 'higher parts of the universal scheme, will be evolved through eternity.

But, *thirdly*, your ambition, perhaps, is of a less exalted kind,—you have children, it may be, or dependants, in whose welfare you are deeply interested, and you anxiously wish to be continued in life, that you may be the means of providing for those who are dear to you. The wish is, no doubt, a natural one,—but have you not experienced, in *your own case*, that ‘God has never left you nor forsaken you’—that he has, indeed, manifested himself, in all his conduct, to have been, towards you, *providing* God,—and is it not, to have learnt but little from all this goodness, to doubt, that if God sees fit to call you out of life, he will also become, in your place, the Friend and Protector of those whom you are forced, by his Providence, to cast upon *his* care?

Still *farther*, you, perhaps, feel regret at the idea of leaving the many peculiar enjoyments that make up your portion in this world, and you think it hard, that, having so many sources of gratification above other men, you should be forced to forego them all, and to bid adieu to a world in which you have had so good an inheritance. But these enjoyments and advantages existed and were partaken of by other men before you knew of their existence; were you in a condition to appreciate them; h

ever long, too, you may live, myriads are yet to come forth who are destined to taste the same blessings, after your course has been finished; and, above all, He who sees fit to call you from your present blessings, can far more than compensate to you for their loss in some greater scene, for which your improved powers of enjoyment are about to be prepared.

*Lastly*, there are men, who have not so much any objection to die, as a wish that they might be preserved a little longer, till they have attained a better assurance of Divine favor, and a more comfortable hope of eternal happiness. But God has his own time both for our entrance into life and for our departure from it,—and he chooses not so much to wait for our wishes on this subject, as to try our *obedience* by calling us, it may be, at the moment, when we least expected the call, or would most willingly put it off,—he chooses, perhaps to advance us to our reward, from amidst the very depth of the affliction, with which he has seen fit to try us,—at any rate, his purposes and his wisdom, in so great a dispensation, are far above the reach of our present thoughts, and our happiness and duty consist in bowing implicitly to his will, and in not presuming to judge for ourselves, in a *matter of such high moment*, and

all the consequences and relations of v our eternal welfare, we are incapable mating.

In general, it ought to be kept in us upon this subject, that there is gr dom and beauty in that arrangement, b of which Divine Providence has det that the time and manner of our d from this world shall be at the disposa man, but of God.

What a miserable thing, indeed, v have been for man,—what mischiefs a fusion would it have occasioned, had rangements of Providence been differ men had been left to decide, in so tant a matter, according to their own propriety, or even according to the of their own caprices and vexations! life of every man, in this world, is cor with arrangements which are prepared in that invisible state, on which he ha enter; and had we been left to o choice, the unhappy would then hav from this state, while the *best time* for t ception in another had not yet arrive before, indeed, the purposes of their exi *in the present state*, had been compl

many men having been very unhappy, and brought even to the gates of death, who have yet lived to see much good, and to do many excellent services to the cause of God upon earth. Even the good man, in a moment of sore irritation might have resigned his hope, and lost much of the benefit of his former fidelity.

On the other hand, the prosperous and the sensual would never think of leaving this world, but in spite of all representations of propriety and duty, would cleave to their present enjoyments forever.

In so important a matter, God has, therefore, with most beautiful wisdom, kept the times and the manner of our departure in his own hand, and the duty of every man is to wait, even amidst the severest trials, till that time has come,—since not a pain that we feel, nor a tear that we shed, is unknown to God, and his time for our removal is the only one that is in all respects, suited to our permanent welfare.

Hence it is, that God so often tries men, by permitting them to 'wish for death when they cannot find it,'—and that, on the other hand, they as often wish to delay his approach, while he presses on them with resistless power.

Hence, also, we may perceive the propriety and guilt of judging for ourself so important a matter. In the ordinary of life, the man who struggles, *bravely* some great calamity, commonly better condition, after his patience has had its effect work,'—while he, who, in a moment of fretfulness, deserts his station, as common but involves himself in still greater disaster. We have no reason to judge differently respecting the last and greatest trial that has been appointed for us in life. Those who in it have the earnest of a yet greater trial for which their impatience has destined them—they cast themselves, *voluntarily*, as has been strikingly said, on some 'uncomfortable spot in the universe,'—while those, who endure to the end, have a pledge in their patience, of a happy reversion to all their sorrows and the greater and more continued sufferings, provided they have been well sustained, the more confidently may this promise of an eventual recompense be entertained.

IX.

CONSIDERATIONS CALCULATED TO LESSEN THE  
FEAR OF DEATH.

psalm xxiii. 4. *Though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*

In the first place, *all* men die,—and death, before, cannot be regarded as, in itself, an evil, but only as part of that mysterious, but good and wise plan, which Divine Providence has appointed for the final perfecting of his works. It is, also, in this view, but part of the inheritance to which all were born, and which we should, consequently, accept it, with the same trust and thankfulness, with which we have seen reason to meet all the other portions of our history. Above all, this consideration ought to teach us, that, in leaving this world, we are going ‘not to the dead but to the living,’ to the innumerable company of all times and all countries, who now people the invisible dominions of God,—to the Prophets, and Apostles, and Wise Men, and Saints, who were, in our day, ‘the Excellent Ones of the earth,’—who, like us, left this world, not that they had resigned the enjoyment of existence, but



that they might join the countless Host of the Spiritual Kingdom of God.

In the second place, men obviously meet their last hours under very different circumstances,—some being cut off suddenly, others by slow and almost imperceptible decay, a few amidst pleasing anticipations of the happiness which is reserved for the good in a better world, and many, amidst sore or long-continued irritation, of body or of mind.

No conclusion, however, can be drawn from these varieties, respecting either the character of any individual or his future prospects; for those who have seen many such varieties must have remarked, that the worst of men sometimes meet death with unconcern, or are *suddenly* called to their account, while the most exemplary characters are subjected to long and humiliating distress, and meet the moment of their departure under the pressure of much awful uncertainty.

These varieties depend, in a great degree, on the nature of the disease which has been appointed to cut us off,—some complaints being productive of a calm and subdued tone of mind, while others, as naturally, are accompanied by great anxiety, and try the patience of the sufferer to the uttermost

in all these things, God has a great  
 going forward with the souls which he  
 redeems, which we are incapable of fully  
 understanding,—and there are relations of  
 present distresses and of the mode of our  
 removal from this world, to the future events  
 of our history, and to the honor or the shame  
 hereafter to inherit, which it is not possi-  
 ble that we should understand, unless the  
 extent of our existence were laid open to  
 us, that what seems to us most hard and  
 oppressive, when our attention is limited by that  
 narrow portion of our existence which is connect-  
 ed with this world, may be productive of ben-  
 efits of the highest and most enduring kind,  
 if the entire range of our history is taken  
 into account; and thus while the bad may  
 be called, by an easy release from this  
 to melancholy prospects and painful en-  
 durance in a greater scene, the afflictions  
 have sorely tried the hearts of the good,  
 working out for them ‘an eternal weight  
 of glory.’

For the same reason we should not be hasty  
 in considering the lamentations of nature as  
 signs of impatience,—but should rather believe,  
 who *sorely tries the hearts of his crea-  
 tures, knows also the measure of endurance*

of which their nature is capable, demands more of man than he is made capable of performing.

In the third place, we are apt to be struck with the mere pains of dissolution in a particularly awful kind, and that the tremors and convulsions which betoken death indicate, also, some dreadful error in the living principle is undergone. It has been wisely and justly remarked by one who is acquainted with our bodily frame, that, in all probability, the man who has suffered from a serious disease has suffered more than a man who has fallen a victim to death, the suffering being occasioned by the struggle with the malady that was opposed to the *victory* which that man, in the case, has gained. The convulsions and agonies are, probably, but inventions, and however fearful to the eye, and distressing to the senses, are not really greater than the convulsions which often occur in the living, and which depart from the body without leaving any consciousness, in the case of the melancholy state to which the patient is reduced.

In the fourth place, the humiliations that attend our departure

orld, and the melancholy *rites* that have a place in it, derive all their influence, on our thoughts, from an illusion of our imaginations. We fancy that we shall still be in a condition, after life is extinct, to mourn over the humiliation into which our mortal part has fallen; and we thus extend our present feelings and views to that time, and to that condition of our future, when all sense and all imagination shall have perished.

It is, on the other hand, a beautiful view which has been given us in Scripture of our last state,—and one which it must be peculiarly consolatory to the imaginations of the dying to make familiar to their thoughts,—when it speaks of the grave as a *bed* of repose prepared for man after his labors and anxieties of his day of life,—as quiet *sleep* upon the bosom of a friend to whom he may commit all our cares with security,—and as a *lying down* from the fatigues of this mortal journey, in the blessed and assured hope of a joyful morning which is hereafter to dawn upon all ‘who are at rest.’ ‘For,’ says the Apostle, ‘if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, believe also that *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with him.’

Another circumstance which renders the pros-

pect of death awful, is the apprehended greatness of the *change* to which it introduces us, and the unknown nature of that country and of that state of being on which, when we leave this world, we must enter. And, it is no doubt, a solemn and an awful thing to encounter so great a change—and every considerate man will pray with all the fervor of his spirit, that he may not advance to such an untried condition without a becoming regard to the awfulness of his prospects. Still, we ought not to forget, even amidst such solemn thoughts, that we have already had abundant evidence of the fatherly care, and of the benevolent plans of that Being who gave us our place in life, and who has hitherto conducted us, through a *variety* of scenes, in each of which we have found suitable accommodation provided for us, and many rich tokens of the condescending mercy with which he furnishes the abodes of his creatures. We ought not, consequently, to suppose, that that untried scene, on which we are about to enter, will be characterized by less care on the part of God, or by fewer accommodations suited to our altered nature,—but, rather, that we are about to be admitted to a still wider view of the dominions of God,—and to a richer experience of that bounty *with which*, after the endurance of sore trouble

he blesses the glorified spirits of his children. And, with such convictions, we should be ready to adopt the beautiful words of the Psalmist,—  
**The Lord has been my Shepherd, and I shall not want,—he has led me by green pastures and still waters. Though I walk, therefore, through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,—for he is with me. His rod and staff they comfort me. Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

‘But, in the last place,’ says the Apostle, ‘the sting of death is sin,’—and men fear to die, because they are apprehensive of the consequences of that *account* which they must render unto God, ‘for all the deeds done by them in the body.’ And it certainly is not the part of any judicious Instructor of the dying, to flatter the self-love of man by instilling hopes that are not warranted by the previous character of the individual, or by the declarations of Scripture respecting the strictness of that retribution which shall come to all men for the deeds done by them in life. At the same time, it is our duty to represent to the *sick*, and to bear at all times on our own minds, that the Almighty has made it the purpose of all his dispensations to *instruct mankind* that ‘he has no pleasure

in the death of a sinner but rather that he turn from his wickedness and live,'—that is no moment of life, at which a sincere pardon will be met on the part of God with rejection,—but rather, that like the Father who saw his prodigal son returning to him from the utmost depth of his despair, the Father has been represented, in the words of the Saviour, as saying of his wandering Son, 'Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and put shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us drink and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'

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## X.

IN WHAT MANNER, OR WITH WHAT SPIRIT,  
DEATH SHOULD BE MET.

Matt. xxliii. 46. *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*

In the first place, it is evident, that death ought not to be met with levity, or with the pretences of despising its awfulness,—for it is the most fearful of all the events we can

to encounter,—not merely from the change which it produces in our mortal part, and from many fears and agonies with which its arrival is attended,—but from the unspeakable importance, to our final well-being or misery, those untried but enduring scenes, to which, by the plan of Divine Providence, it is destined to introduce us. Even in the ordinary changes of life, there is admitted impropriety and a source of unhappiness, in the conduct of him, who advances to any important alteration or trial without solemn preparation, or with the rash thinking and daring liberty of a presumptuous spirit; and, on the other hand, it is acknowledged to be a matter of great propriety, and never fails to be attended with good consequences, when we are about to meet with any event of moment, that we should summon all our powers of reflection, and should humbly commit ourselves with due preparation, to the favoring providence of God. And if this be the conduct that is most suitable, even in the lesser changes of our history, how sinful must be the conduct of those who rush upon their last trial without serious consideration, and seem voluntarily to relinquish all title to the character of reflecting and serious-minded men, at a time when God is calling them to the



most solemn of all endurances, and i bestow on them the appropriate cons of all that they have done in life!

But though death ought not to be me concern, neither is it met, in the mo ing spirit, when the heart of him wh to encounter it, is assailed by unma or even when there is any *distrust* of providence which has followed us all with loving-kindness and tender mer in the indulgence of such fears, in such distrust, that men are most apt this matter, so that death has been em styled the **King of Terrors**—and most said to be all their lifetime subject to through fear of death. But to allay s it ought to be recollected, that death as all the other parts of our history, pointment of a Being who can have n view, in his dispensations, but the v his creatures,—that all men,—the goo as the bad,—have yielded to death,— it neither altogether terminates our e nor takes us out of the dominion of providence of God,—but, on the co only one of those great changes throu our mortal nature is destined to pass,— *introduction to some greater scene,*

ensations of Providence shall be unfolded  
er in a more glorious or more awful—but  
ll events,—in a more enduring form.

resumption is one of the most unbecoming  
es of mind in which any man can be found.  
ry man is a compound of good and of bad  
lities,—much that is evil or questionable  
is at the bottom of the best actions, even of  
e who consider themselves to be the Excel-  
ones of the earth,—and it does not, con-  
iently, become any man to presume too  
h for himself as to his future state,—for  
le he believes himself to be something that  
ngularly good and praiseworthy, he may,  
eality, be only miserably deluding himself  
. misapprehension of his qualities, and may  
worthy only of a very subordinate place in  
divine kingdom.

le may carry this remark still farther, and  
rt, that so imperfect is the knowledge of  
r own character, even of those who have  
e it the object of their most careful study,  
if we shall be able, amidst the new arrange-  
ts of our future state, to compare the con-  
n in which we shall then be individually  
ed, with what we supposed to have been  
*characters in time*,—there is no man who

will not have reason to wonder at the condition to which he has at last arrived,—while, at the same time, he is lost in admiration at the depth of that wisdom which has finally fixed him in that condition in all respects suited to his real character on earth.

*Presumption* is then a foolish misconception of our own characters and real worth,—but the other hand, *despair* is a sin of great magnitude against God,—for he has revealed himself, by all his conduct, to be a Being who actuated by a tender regard towards all creatures, and who earnestly calls all men come to him by repentance,—and, indeed, black is this guilt, that a state of utter dejection is commonly understood to be not the chief misery, but the last evidence of extreme worthlessness in the condition of those who are finally reprobate.

There is, then, an essential difference between *Despair* and the deepest *Humiliation* for those whom we have committed,—for contrition never works with any kindly effect upon the human heart, unless it is, indeed, of the true kind, except when accompanied and purified by an apprehension and hope of divine *Mercy*.

Death, then, ought to be met neither with *becoming levity*, nor with unmanly fear,—

er with a presumptuous confidence in our own  
 uth, nor with an impious and gloomy distrust  
 the benevolence of God,—but with much so-  
 munity of feeling, as the most important of all  
 e events that can happen to us, and the most  
 omentous in its consequences to our final hap-  
 ness,—with a becoming attention to all acts of  
 opriety and manly decency, with a steadfast  
 id unfeigned exercise of all christian graces,  
 id, above all, with such confidence in the  
 ghteous dispensations of Providence, as may  
 ow that we consider it to be the last test afford-  
 us by God, of the faith with which we have  
 arnt to commit ourselves to all his appoint-  
 ents.

*A placid* death is no doubt one of the most  
 autiful and instructive sights which this world  
 n present,—for God and all good angels seem  
 en to be welcoming the departing spirit to its  
 ward, and bestowing on it, even before it leaves  
 is world, an earnest of the blessedness that  
 waits it in a better;—and this, accordingly, is  
 at kind of death which every person must  
 ost anxiously wish for himself;—for who has  
 t often said with the sacred writer,—‘Mark  
 a perfect man, and behold the upright, for  
 e end of that man is peace,’—‘Let me die

the death of the righteous, and let my be like his?’

There are even instances of men c from the trials of this life not merely v posture, but with *triumphant* anticipati glory that awaits them, and who have ed with the Apostle, ‘Now am I rea offered up, and the time of my depart hand,—I have fought a good fight, I ished my course, I have kept the faith, forth there is laid up for me a crow which the Lord, the righteous Judge, me at that day,—and not to me onl all them also that love his appearir death, where is thy sting? O grave, thy victory?—The sting of death is the strength of sin is the law,—but t to God who giveth us the victory thr Lord Jesus Christ.’ ‘And I know persuaded, that neither life nor death, n present nor things to come, shall be separate me, from the love of God, w Christ Jesus our Lord.’

But though a *placid* and sometime *triumphant* death have been displayed of those who have done well the task them in life, and who have thus seem *ceive*, even in time, a portion of th

ited them in eternity,—yet neither of  
 nds of death makes part of the most  
 lot assigned unto men, nor does God  
 grant either of them, even to those who  
 ne their part most conscientiously, and  
 re borne the hardest struggles with the  
 emplary propriety. On the contrary,  
 reserved them, like the other tokens  
 vor, to be conferred at the time, and in  
 , which, to his infinite wisdom, seems  
 nd he often calls even the best beloved  
 ildren to himself from the midst of great  
 on,—or from what seem to them to be  
 idings of his fatherly countenance. In  
 there is a great mystery of Providence,  
 as a connexion with future and greater  
 of the divine dispensations towards his  
 d offspring,—but which is not indicative  
 f the characters of those who so suffer,  
 eir future station in the divine domin-  
 nd, therefore, without being cast down  
 our last hours are not passed either in  
 joyment or in triumphant anticipation,  
 ld think it sufficient, if we are able,  
 Redeemer, and like the first Martyr of  
 i, to say, 'Father, into thy hands I com-  
 spirited.'

## OF THE VALUE OF A DEATH-BED REPENTANCE

Psalm lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. *Will the Lord cast off forever?  
will he be favorable no more?*

*Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise  
for evermore?*

*Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in  
shut up his tender mercies?*

There are several *distinct* questions which are apt to be confounded with each other in discourses on this subject,—and with the determination of which from the chief point to be terminated, it is, therefore, proper that we should commence our statements.

The question, then, is *not*, in the first place, whether a person who is in health, and is pursuing a course of vice, may trust to a death-bed repentance.

For, 1. Sudden and premature deaths are more common, than those which occur after the utmost lapse of the years allotted to human existence has been completed; we, accordingly, see Death every where marking out his victims and calling the healthy and the vigorous to last account, much more frequently than those who are bowed down with years and infirmities—and no man, therefore, whatever may be the strength of his constitution or the mean

lth which, at any moment, he enjoys, is en-  
 ed to presume that he shall escape the stroke  
 ich is cutting off others, with equal advan-  
 es, on all sides of him,—or to defer a work  
 so much importance as that of his prepara-  
 on for death, on a supposition, which he has  
 little reason to believe will be justified by the  
 ent.

2. Even supposing a man to attain to an ex-  
 me old age, or to something approaching to  
 ut term which has been assigned to the years  
 man on this earth,—it is much more proba-  
 that the concluding years of such a life will  
 spent, either in a state of complete exhaus-  
 n of all the powers both of mind and of body,  
 in the endurance of violent and most harass-  
 g distress,—than that they will find the indi-  
 lual in the possession of so much self-com-  
 nd, and in such a becoming state of compos-  
 e as is necessary for any effectual perform-  
 ce of the great and paramount duty of pre-  
 ring himself to appear before his Creator and  
 dge.

3. If, however, we should suppose an indi-  
 lual both to attain to a *good* old age, and to  
 end his last years in a state of comparative  
 edom from violent disease, still he has no  
 ht to *presume*, that any feelings of repent-



ance which he may then choose to shall be of, the genuine and acceptable it is much more likely, that they may be the result of his *fears* influencing his meditation, and rather degrading his heart rendering it better, and purer, and more submissive to God and goodness than it was in the former period of his life;—at least it is not sumptuous in any man to expect, that he never could bring his mind to any just view of repentance, during his past year of sorrow and happiness, he shall be able to sustain such feelings, in their genuine character, so many counteracting and harassing impressions, of another kind, must conspire to prevent him of this power;—and, on all accounts, it is manifestly most improper to expect of a man who is at present in health, and not engaged in a course of vice, to flatter himself with the hope, that a death-bed repentance will be so much as be put in his power.

But neither, in the second place, is it reasonable to put in question at issue, what God can do or how he will perform his operations in any particular instances,—but *what* he will do in the ordinary course of things, and from the influence of the operations of the human mind, we are to expect.

1. God can no doubt entirely c

heart and character of any man at any moment,—as he can call any individual into existence when he pleases, and endow him with whatever powers of body or of mind seem best suited to his destined place in existence.

2. It may be, also, that a few instances have occurred, in which such an entire change has taken place instantaneously, either during the progress of life, to serve some grand purpose of Providence, or at the termination of it. The conversion of Paul, and the promise made to the thief on the cross, may be viewed in this light.

3. But, then, all such instances are to be regarded not as the usual workings of Providence, but as special acts for a particular purpose to be served in life,—or, if occurring at the end of it, as connected with circumstances, and it may be with future relations in the history of the individual, which we are not able to estimate,—and which cannot be considered as authorising us to expect similar interferences in other particular instances.

The question then is,—supposing the repentance of a death-bed to be sincere and genuine, what is its value,—or what are we entitled to conclude from it, as to the future state of the individual in whose case it has occurred?

Now, this being the general statement of the question, two separate opinions have been entertained respecting it.

In the first place, it has been insinuated that, supposing the repêntance to be of the *true* kind, it is attended of course with an entire change in the character and condition of the repentant person, and must, consequently, place him in the same state, hereafter, as if he had spent all his life in acts of duty.

On the other hand, it is maintained, that, supposing a man to have spent his former days in sin,—it is no duty, but a mockery of God and a trifling with his own heart, to cherish feelings of repentance, of the sincerity of which he cannot be certain,—or rather which he has so much reason to suspect to be false and delusive,—and which, at all events, can be no compensation for the neglect of the great duty which he has left unfulfilled,—the duty of managing to the best advantage all the talents and opportunities that had been granted him in life.

I shall now offer a few hints, on each of these opinions, in their order.

In the first place, then, there seem to be but *two* principles on which we can conceive a

man's future condition to be determined;—either,—that condition must be the result of his whole conduct on earth,—or it must be determined by the state of his soul at the moment of its departure from life.

If the former of these is to be taken as the rule, then it is evident that the repentance of a death-bed—forming but a very small portion of a man's whole conduct—cannot be considered as entitling him to entertain, at least, any very extravagant hopes as to the result to which it shall lead,—even though, as a part of his entire conduct, it may not be left altogether unnoticed in the determination of his final condition.

If, on the other hand, the second consideration mentioned—that, I mean, of the state of the soul at the moment of its departure from life—is chiefly or solely to be taken into account, then we have to inquire what is, in all fair estimation, the state of a man, who, after having lived an unconcerned or vicious life, at last becomes sensible of the evil of his ways, and humbles himself, however sincerely, for the deeds which he has done.

Now, the most that can be said of such a man's state of mind seems to be this,—that, having become aware of the evil of his ways,

and of the value of a better course of life, he has formed a deliberate and sincere *resolution*—if Providence shall favor him with an opportunity—of living a better life in all coming time. But, surely, this *sorrow* and this *resolution* do not imply, that evil *habits* which have long been contracting, are at once removed from their influence on his mind,—that good feelings, and all christian graces, which, also, are of slow and progressive growth, have likewise gained that ascendancy, which time and practice alone in the ordinary course of things, can give,—or that the work which was given to the individual to do in life, the trust that was committed to him, and which he has failed to fulfil, will henceforth be regarded as if it had been faithfully and punctually done.

The truth is, we reason from an analogy which is not strictly applicable to the subject, when we suppose that a human soul, the *character* of which is constituted by *habits* and *dispositions* that have been gradually acquired, can be changed *at once*, as we alter the constitution and entire complexion of any fixed and unorganized substance by the addition of a new ingredient. Such an instantaneous and entire change belongs *only* to fixed and unorganized substances,—for in the *ordinary course*

*of things*, all progressive natures, from their very definition, admit but of a change more or less gradual, according to circumstances,—and, as a plant which has been nourished by vicious juice, or a human body which has been attacked by any constitutional disease, only recovers its healthful state by time, and a slow alteration of its morbid properties—so the state of a human soul, which is made up of habits and dispositions gradually acquired, can only, in the usual course of nature, be materially or entirely changed, by a corresponding admission of new habits, and a gradual assimilation of a different order of attributes.

It hence follows, as we have already stated, that the utmost that can be said even of the most sincere death-bed repentance is,—that it is a *resolution*, on the part of him who so repents, *if Providence shall give him an opportunity*, to adopt such a course of conduct as may eventually free his mind from all its evil inclinations, and imbue it with a new order of more becoming dispositions, and so far as human means can do, may enable him, to counteract any evil consequences which are likely to result from his careless or unfaithful discharge of the trust, which, as a servant of God, had been committed to him in life.

And hence, also, it follows, that there may be a most important difference between the future condition even of the most sincere penitent, who has only attained to his penitence at the close of life, and that of the man who has been all his life long employed in subduing whatever evil propensities had made part of his nature,—and cultivating those graces which adorn the man of God,—and faithfully and successfully discharging the trust committed to him in life, by the Supreme Disposer.

Indeed, beside the error we have now noticed in attributing to a human soul that susceptibility of instantaneous change, which, from its progressive nature, does not, in the *usual course* of things at least, belong to it,—there are two other errors, of a similar kind, which commonly enter into our speculations on this subject,—and which cannot fail, wherever they enter, to confuse and pervert any opinions we may happen to form. I mean, in the first place, that mankind consist simply and absolutely, of two classes, the good and the bad,—and in the second place, that the corresponding simplicity of arrangement may be extended to the future condition of all individuals who have lived in time.

The former of these errors results from a necessarily general, and abstract constitution

language, which precludes us from the use of words adapted to express all the varieties of human character;—that variety being as infinite in its shades and degrees as that which characterizes all the other works of the Supreme God.

But mankind, as they are seen actually existing, do not consist *simply* of the good and the bad, but of the good, in all degrees of goodness, and of the bad, in all degrees and varieties of wickedness,—these two classes, also, like all the other works of God, may be observed to run, in imperceptible shades, into each other, so that, if we take the best of the bad, and the worst of the good, no human language and no human imagination even is capable of drawing a distinction between them.

There are, accordingly, in the beautiful words of the Son of God, 'many mansions' in the future kingdom; and God, who is intimately acquainted with the most secret attributes of all his creatures, insomuch, that not even the faintest evanescent of our thoughts is unmarked or registered by him, will at last apportion the portion of every man according to that which he has done in life,—and even according to the faintest *imperceptible* attributes, so far, at least, as the *eye of man could discern*, of that character



by which he has been distinguished from every other individual of the countless myriads that have lived in time. 'For as one star differs from another star in glory, so shall it be at the resurrection of the just,'—and as he who has been guilty of great offences 'shall be beaten with many stripes,' he, also, who has abused but few opportunities, or been guilty of few transgressions, 'shall be beaten with few stripes.'

The foregoing considerations seem to make sufficiently evident, that the extravagant hopes which are sometimes founded on a death-bed repentance,—even when that repentance has been of the best kind,—are not authorized by any just conceptions either of the *progressive* nature of the human soul,—of the *trust* committed to every man in this world,—of the *infinite variety* by which the characters of all the individuals of mankind are distinguished from each other,—or of the corresponding infinity of characters and endowments which God seems to be preparing, by means of these differences, for the future *places* of his boundless dominions.

But, on the other hand, these considerations are far from authorizing the belief that a death-

bed repentance is of no avail in the sight of God—or that it is presumption and folly in man, after having lived a life of sin, to endeavor to depart from life under the influence of a better spirit.

For, whichever of the two principles formerly mentioned we adopt, as that by which the fate of every man is hereafter to be determined,—whether the whole conduct of a man during his abode upon this earth, or the state of his soul at the moment of its departure from this world,—a death-bed repentance, when genuine, must, on either supposition, make an important difference between the final condition of him who has sincerely sorrowed for his sins, and adopted a resolution of new obedience, and that of the man who departs from life with a mind hardened against goodness and presumptuously rushing upon the fate that awaits him.

If the former rule be adopted, namely, that of the man's whole conduct during life, then it is plain, that the repentance of a death-bed is, at least, *one act* of that life; that it is an act performed under *peculiar and impressive* circumstances, and likely to make a deep impression on the entire character of the man from this very consideration; and lastly, that being *the last act* of his life, it may be considered as indicating,

both that he departs not from this life unrepentate to all that is good, and that he rests not on the future condition of his being together abandoned to hope.

If the other consideration be rather chosen, namely, that of the state of the soul at its departure from the body, then there must be a great difference in the state of that soul, after it has seen the evil of sin, and the value of holiness, and become sensible of the importance of the trust with which it had been honored, though it has failed to perform it with success, and the state in which it would have departed if no such convictions had been attained, on the contrary, if a life of vice had been entered upon by that most awfully ominous of all states, in which the heart of man refuses to be corrected of the folly of its delusions, and after having done wrong, presumptuously chooses to run on to the consequences of its folly, when about to be summoned into the presence of its Judge.

From these considerations, then, it seems to follow, that a death-bed repentance will be void of *all* good consequences to him who attains to it, provided it has been sincerely performed, though they are far from authorizing belief that these consequences will be of *magnit* is sometimes supposed; that

is in believing that God, who is acquainted with the most secret arts, and with all the changes of his creatures may be willing to admit into his account some good which any of his creatures have undergone—though those creatures changed have no reason to suppose they shall be viewed by God as if they had executed that *trust* in life, which they profess they have failed to fulfil, and their future condition shall be the same as of those who have done much better; of whom it has been said, that they shall all shine as the brightness of the sun, and be as the stars for ever and

ever. Hence, from our experience of the effects of afflictions, we conclude that in the world, we sometimes see men who are delivered from the power of vice by great afflictions, and who are employed in executing serious purposes of piety and living, after they have been delivered from their former ways, to be examples of the same to others, or to confer important benedictions upon their fellow creatures; and we cannot but be sensible that the affliction which generated these good dispositions of mind had terminated in

death, God would have taken no account of that change, or treated them as if they were altogether unfit for a place in his kingdom.

In the second place, though it be true that God does sometimes visit the past sins of men, unexpectedly to them, with awful and long-continued judgments; yet such judgments seem almost uniformly to fall only on those who have either *presumptuously* offended, or who have enjoyed signal *advantages*,—while, on the other hand, sincere penitence is commonly the forerunner of good to a man, and generally prepares the way for his final admission to bliss, or even for an eventual, though it may be a distant release, from all his distresses.

Lastly, the whole tenor and spirit of the sacred writings confirm these opinions,—the character, when properly understood, is a manifestation of Divine mercy to man,—see how they authorise us to believe that the lowest state of debasement into which any man can fall is the least prophetic to him of good, is that of his departing from life with a heart hardened against all feelings of contrition or resolutions of amendment; and, on the other hand, that God, who had been represented to us under the image of a father rejoicing over the return of a prodigal son, will not utterly shew

he humble and sincere cry for purifying grace, even of him who severed in sin, but who has at last self, with a broken and truly contrite heart at the footstool of that heavenly Father has graciously declared, that 'him who calls upon him, he will in no wise cast

# PRAYERS FOR THE SICK,

IN THE

LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE.

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## I.

THANKFUL REVIEW OF DIVINE GOODNESS DURING LIFE.

1 John iv. 18. *Perfect love casteth out fear.*

REFLECTION.

Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, and God, who at first called me into life, and gave me my place in this beautiful world, and as one of his highly favored offspring, has also shown me by innumerable tokens, that, even amidst all sorrow, he is my best refuge,—and that I may safely commit myself, for time and for eternity, to his *unfailing love.*

## PRAYER.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Surely, O God, thou art good unto all, and thy tender mercies are over all thy works.

Every day have I had reason to bless thee, and to magnify thy holy name,—for thou hast made the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice over me,—thou hast led me by green pastures and still waters,—thou hast prepared a table before me, and made my cup to run over.

To whom can I come but unto thee; for thou wilt have a respect unto the works of thine own hands,—though my heart and strength fail, thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

Whom, O Lord, have I in heaven but thee; and there is none on earth whom I desire besides thee.

Into thy hands, O Father, I commend my spirit.



## II.

## GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

Psalm xxxii. 10. *He that trusteth in the L shall compass him about.*

## REFLECTION.

How often, in the course of life, have I been afflicted, and God has made my sins to come upon me; how often, also, have I suffered what I thought to be evil from the hand of God, and how often has he made it prove to me for good.

Alas! it is only our shortsightedness that makes us suppose that any thing is evil under the superintendence of a perfect goodness, and wisdom, and power. We see but a small part of his plans, and from our view on detached portions, we think that to be *evil*, which is designed to be good, and that to be *defective*, which is a part of one infinitely perfect whole.

How often have I thus erred in my judgment of the conduct of Providence in mine or in other's particular circumstances, and how often, when I had reason, from the course of events, to think that all things were done wisely, and for the *best*.

'his also, then, should be my consolation ground of hope, when I am about to yield my last great trial;—for *that*, also, is but part of the same grand scheme, and, hard as its endurance may be, it is but working out for me, if I duly improve it, 'the peaceable fruits of righteousness,' in some greater and more enduring world.

## PRAYER.

Blessed, O Lord, be thy name for the promise given to us,—that all things work together for good to them that love thee,—to those who are called according to thy purpose.

And thanks be to thy name, that though no affliction for the present seemeth joyous but grievous, yet to them that are exercised thereby it worketh out the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Clouds and darkness surround thy throne,—thy footsteps are in the sea, and thy path in the deep waters,—and thy goings cannot be traced.

Blessed be thy name, that justice and judgment are at all times the habitation of thy throne,—that mercy and truth go continually before thy face.

The Lord is my light and my salvation,

whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

Although the fig-tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine,—though the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat,—though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will glory in the God of my salvation.

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust,—let me not be confounded. Let the shadows of death depart, and the day-dawn arise on my soul, for then shall I see light clearly. Amen.

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### III.

#### CONFESSION OF SIN.

1 John i. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from unrighteousness.*

#### REFLECTION.

Amidst the deep affliction into which I have now fallen, when the sorrows and fears of death encompass me, and all the vain delusions of life appear to me in their true character, how different is the opinion which I have been

to form of my own conduct, from that which I cherished, when all things went well with me, and I rioted in the enjoyment of health and prosperity.

I imagined myself to be pure and praiseworthy before God, and entitled to a high place in his approbation and heavenly kingdom,—while I thought not that I was running on in a course of presumptuous sin, that I was less attentive than I ought to have been to divine ordinances and duties, that I nourished pride and angry passions in my heart, that I was sensual, low-minded, and unclean,—that even my best actions and feelings were tainted with much imperfection and sin, and that there was nothing in me that should have rendered me confident of an acquittal in the presence of him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence.

Alas! all these delusions have now vanished, for God is now trying my heart, and making me to see how poor and worthless have been all my past actions.

What a different view would I now take of things if God should see fit again to restore me to health and to an active part in his kingdom upon earth, how should I keep my heart, and

order all my ways before him,—and what price should I have in despising all sin, that I might make my whole life a sacrifice of obedience which should be well-pleasing in his sight.

But, if the hand of death is upon me, and shall no more serve God in the land of the living, may I be enabled, as the only duty which now remains to me, as a sinful and miserable being, humbly and contritely to make confession of my sins before God, who has declared that him that cometh unto Him he will in no wise cast out; and, O! may I neither endeavor to apologise for any faults of which I have been guilty, nor refuse to bow down my spirit in deep abasement for the evils which I cannot hide from my own heart.

May God grant me his spirit, to search and try my heart, while I now endeavor to make confession of all the evils by which my life has been stained.

#### PRAYER.

O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face unto thee, for mine iniquities have gone over my head, and are become a burden too heavy for me to bear.

Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee

; sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O  
 'preserver of men. If I should justify my-  
 ny own mouth would condemn me. If I  
 I say, I am perfect, that also would prove  
 rverse.

hou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, who  
 stand? But there is forgiveness with  
 that thou mayest be feared,—with thee  
 is plenteous redemption; therefore will I  
 ss mine iniquity,—I will be sorry for my  
 -I will lay my hand upon my mouth, and  
 outh in the dust, crying out, unclean,  
 an,—God be merciful to me a sinner.

ve mercy on me, O Lord, for thy great  
 es' sake; and, in the multitude of thy ten-  
 ompassions, blot out mine iniquities.

ave known to do good, but have not done  
 have often come before thee as thy people  
 , and I have sat before thee as thy people  
 hile my heart has been far from thee.

ave not meditated in the law of the Lord,  
 made it my delight. It has not been sweet  
 my taste. It has not been to me a dis-  
 or of the thoughts and intents of the heart.  
 have cast off fear, and have restrained  
 or before God. I have not called on thy  
 , nor stirred up myself to take hold on

*I have not set the Lord continually be-*

fore me. Thou hast not been in a thoughts.

Even when I would have done good, ev been present with me; for I have found in my members warring against the law of mind, and which is not subject to the Christ.

I have often been angry without a and anger hath rested in my bosom; I spoken unadvisedly with my lips.

I have minded the things of the flesh than the things of the spirit.

My conversation has not been without etousness, nor have I learned, in every to be content with such things as I have.

I have been verily guilty concerning brethren of the flesh, and have not studied things that make for peace, nor things wh we might edify one another.

I have despised the chastening of the and have fainted when I was rebuked of I

I have not been faithful in that which little, but have hid my talent in a napkin, have said in my heart, that for these t thou wouldst not call me into judgment.

My goodness has been as the morning and the early dew, which passeth away; in me there has been an evil heart of un

departing from the living God; I have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out to myself cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water.

Thou hast sent even thy Son to save me,—and I have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for thy great mercies' sake, and in the multitude of thy tender compassions, blot out mine iniquities.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified. Take away all mine iniquities, heal my backslidings, and love me freely.

Look upon me in the face of thine Anointed, —let me be freely justified by thy grace, through the redemption that is in him.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy sight, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

Teach me, O Lord, while I am in the world —sanctify me daily more and more, that at my departure from this body of sin, I may be presented without spot and blameless before thy presence with exceeding joy. For Christ's sake. Amen.



## IV.

## DIVINE MERCY.

Psalm ciii. 77 . *The mercy of the Lord is lasting to everlasting.*

## REFLECTION.

How awful were the consciousness of the heart of man, if he had not also an assurance that God is merciful to his iniquities, and sweet with this impression, are these words, 'Like as a father pitieth his child, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, for he hath our frame, he remembereth that we are dust, as the heavens are above the earth, so are his thoughts above our thoughts; as far as the East is from the West, so far will he remove our iniquities from us.'

How dismal were the aspect of this world, if all its present magnificence were but an illusion, and of those fearful scenes which are destined to receive the disobedient creatures who have cast their few and transient years upon its vanity. But how lovely, on the other hand, does the face of inanimate Nature appear, when the mercy of God is represented as falling like the silent and refreshing dew, or as light

its numberless scenes into varied and softened beauty, like the 'day-spring from on high,' when it breaks through the shades of night, and spreads its radiance on the mountains.

As the sweet sound of a father's voice is to the prodigal son, who seeks to regain his home, and who learns that all his wanderings are forgiven,—as the blessed intimation of pardon to the convict, around whom the chains of death and the pains of hell have been cast,—so is the healing voice of *divine forgiveness* to the humbled and repentant hearts of the children of men.

I will join, therefore, with the Psalmist, in singing of the *mercies* of the Lord,—with my mouth will I make known his faithfulness to all generations. I will unite my voice with that of the heavenly Hosts, who praised God and sung, glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to men.

#### THANKSGIVING.

I will praise the Lord, for it is pleasant, and it is comely; yea, it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,—to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High,—to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness very night.

Is not this thy name and thy memorial to all generations,—The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, who forgivest iniquity, transgression and sin?

Thou retainest not thine anger for ever, because thou delightest in mercy.

As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.

Blessed be thy name, that as at sundry times and in divers manners thou didst speak of thy mercy in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, thou hast in these last days spoken unto us by thy Son,—that he took not on him the nature of angels, but was of the seed of Abraham,—that when he was brought into the world, a multitude of the heavenly hosts praised God and sung, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to men,—that he pitched his tent among us, full of grace and truth,—and that he came to seek and to save them that were lost.

Hosannah to the Son of David, blessed be he who came in the name of the Lord to save us; Hosannah in the highest.

Blessed be thy name that he has taught us to believe, that as a father rejoiceth over his *returning* child, so our heavenly Father maketh

joy in his House, because those who were dead are alive again, and they that were lost are found.

Hast thou not also appointed, O God, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, unto all nations.

How beautiful, O our God, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring good tidings—that publish peace—that cry unto the inhabitants of the earth, Behold your God.

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour, for he that is mighty hath done great things for us; holy and reverend is his name.

Yea, let all flesh bless his holy name, for ever and ever. Amen.

## V.

IMITATION OF CHRIST IN HIS OBEDIENCE, THAT  
 LIKE HIM WE MAY OBTAIN GLORY AND TRI-  
 UMPH.

Hebrews xii. 1, 2. *Let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

## REFLECTION.

What a miserable inheritance does this our human nature sometimes seem to us to be,—doomed to labor, and privation, and care, during the greater portion of its earthly history,—approaching death amidst still greater and more overwhelming agonies, and at last reduced to loathsomeness and apparent annihilation.

How unlike is all this to the other and sublimer qualities which we sometimes delight to consider as belonging to our nature,—how unsuitable does a nature so oppressed seem to be to the goodness and perfect wisdom of that Being who has called it into existence, and placed it in this magnificent portion of his dominions,—how little reason, lastly, might we suppose

selves to have, to anticipate for such a na-  
 e any glorious reversion in the future plans  
 Divine Wisdom!

These are thoughts that, amidst the pres-  
 e of affliction, and, especially, amidst those  
 at agonies that precede death, may some-  
 es intrude upon the minds of the afflicted,  
 l bow them down to the dust, under a sus-  
 ion that they have no part in the love, nor  
 y inheritance in the final blessings of God.

And how consolatory, then, is it, amidst such  
 ights, to recollect, that even the beloved  
 n of God, when he came among us, was a  
 an of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,'  
 it he too was 'exceeding sorrowful, even unto  
 ath, and his sweat like great drops of blood  
 ling down to the ground,'—that death at last  
 med to extinguish all his hopes, and put an  
 d to all his promises of triumph,—but that

this sorrow and humiliation were but the  
 th appointed him by God, for finally conduct-  
 g him to all the glories of his Mediatorial  
 vereignty;—that he, accordingly, rose from  
 e dead, was taken up visibly into heaven,—  
 is invested with all power in heaven and on  
 rth,—has been made the Head over all things  
 the church,—and is to come again, in pow-

er and great glory, to judge the quick and dead.

And as I, too, am now in a similar condition of endurance, how ought I to bless God, for the sublime instruction and consolation which his wonderful history is fitted to convey, and how strong should be my faith in the divine mission of those men of God, who, enlightening us with such a grand picture of the moral destiny of human nature, spake of themselves, but as the Holy Spirit gave utterance, for our edification.

#### PRAYER.

Blessed, O Lord, be thy name, that thou didst send the First Begotten into the world, thou didst prepare for him a body, that he was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,—that he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,—and that he was thus qualified, in all things, to set us an example that we should follow his steps. Help, O Lord, like Christ, to be meek and lowly in heart.

Strengthen me for my last trial, and help me to believe that as Christ was raised from the dead, and set at thy right hand, becom-

humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, this mortal also shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall be clothed with incorruption.

Let not then any of these things move me, being persuaded, that neither suffering nor reproach, nor life nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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## VI.

THANKSGIVING FOR—GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH,—FOR THE SACRIFICE OFFERED BY CHRIST,—HIS RESURRECTION,—INTERCESSION, AND COMING TO JUDGE THE WORLD.

Hebrews iv. 14. *We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens—Jesus, the Son of God.*

### REFLECTION.

‘Will God in very deed dwell with men upon the earth,’—and far removed as we seem to be from his presence, and cut off from any direct view of his essential glory, will he yet condescend, in some gracious and visible manner, to



unite himself with those rational beings who he has formed after his own image, and who he has placed in this distant, though glorious department of his empire? Yes, O my soul, 'God has been manifested in the flesh,' the Son of God took not on him the nature of angels, but was of the seed of Abraham, and thus are we now united to God, since our human nature has been borne by One, who also partook of the nature of God, and has adopted our frail humanity into union with the divine.

How shall a man come before the Lord, or bow himself before the Most High God. Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions,—the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world!

How shall mortal man speak unto God, how shall a creature of the dust hold converse with his Maker? Is there no merciful High Priest, who may present our offerings before the throne of God?

Christ is entered into the holy place not made with hands, into heaven itself,—not with the blood of bulls or of goats, but with his own

l—there to appear in the presence of God  
s.

t how shall mortal man stand before God  
dgment, or how shall a creature of the  
who is also covered with iniquities, ven-  
to look upon the face of Him, in whose sight  
iniquity is an abomination!

ie Father judgeth no man, but hath com-  
d all judgment unto the Son,—and mercy  
udgment now kiss each other,—righteous-  
and truth embrace each other.

PRAYER.

hank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and  
, that though thou hidest thy throne, and  
an can look on its brightness and live,  
hast yet accommodated thyself to our  
e, by sending thy Son in the likeness of  
made of a woman, that we might receive  
doption of sons.

hank thee, O Father, that thou hast com-  
led thy love towards us, in that while we  
yet sinners, Christ died for us, that by  
ffering he hath for ever perfected them  
re sanctified, that he hath finished trans-  
ion, made an end of sin, made reconcilia-

tion for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God.

Lord, give me so to be crucified with Christ that the life which I now live in the flesh, may be by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us.

I thank thee also, O Father, that as Christ died for our offences, he is also risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep, and that we shall all be made alive, like every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming.

Lord grant, that being with Christ, I may also be made alive with him, and that by thy spirit reigning in my mortal body, I may abide with him to newness of life.

How gracious, O God, is the assurance, that he who bore the sins of many, in his own body on the tree, also lives at thy right hand to our intercession for transgressors, that we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ righteous, and that for his sake, thou wilt freely give us all things.

Lord, thou knowest our frame, thou rest

lest that we are but dust, no man can stand  
 before thee in judgment; but blessed be thy  
 name, that, in wrath thou rememberest mercy,  
 and that in condescension to our nature, thou  
 hast appointed a day in which thou wilt judge  
 the world in righteousness, by that man whom  
 thou hast ordained, whereof thou hast given  
 assurance unto all men, in that thou hast raised  
 him from the dead.

Lord deliver me from evil, preserve me to thy  
 heavenly kingdom, and keep me from falling,  
 that I may be presented faultless, at the coming  
 of thy judge, with exceeding joy.

Help me to be ready, with my loins girded,  
 and my lamp burning, because the Son of Man  
 cometh in an hour when we think not.

Even so come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

THE PROMISE OF TH  
DANCE AND OPEI  
COURSE OF LIFE.

John xiv. 17. *I will pr  
you another Comforte.*

REF

It is a humiliating  
during seasons of tria.  
death, to think how m  
all our conduct, during  
on earth, and how of  
from that blessed way

But, on the other han.  
elevating to think, dur  
that God has never, at  
deserted the work of hi  
has continually been st  
powerfully or evidently.  
forming us for the plac  
hold in his kingdom.

It is pleasing to reflect.  
have been at a loss wha

submitted our wisdom to the wisdom of he has made plain our path before us, and us in a right way, for his own name's

It is, also, consolatory to think, that we have been bent on some path, or on accomplishment of some design, which have been hurtful to us, God has inter- to break our purpose, and though it might a hard discipline, has directed us to a e of duty more conducive to our ultimate e.

is also delightful to recollect, that when ve cultivated the graces of the divine life, as never failed to signify his approbation h conduct, by giving us all peace and joy y.

as has he at all times, during the course lives, been carrying on his work for our perfection; and can we think that the line which has thus been carried on gh life, sometimes contrary to our wishes, ith ceaseless consistency, even when we not seen or recognised the hand that led to terminate at that period when our ess is greatest, and when the pressure of s is most sorely trying our strength? t we not rather to believe, and be thank- the belief, that God is still making our

greatest trial to work to us for good, and that he will, in his own good time, perfect that which concerneth us?

## PRAYER.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me be stirred up to bless and to magnify his holy name.

Thou hast made all things work together to me for good,—thou hast often led me in a plain path, when I knew not my own goings.

Thou hast also chastened me, but not in anger,—thou hast taken from me with a stroke the desire of mine eyes.

All my ways have been directed by thee, and thou hast made goodness and mercy to pass before me all the days of my life.

And blessed be thy name, that as earthly parents know how to give good gifts unto their children, so our heavenly Father doth give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him,—that spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.

Forgive me, O God, if at any time I have grieved thy Holy Spirit, or have refused to be a fellow-worker with thee, for mine own good.

And now, O Lord, when I am sorely tried,

And my spirit is disquieted within me, let me  
be enabled still to trust in the Lord, who is the  
health of my countenance, and my God.

Lord cover me, when the floods do overflow  
me. Perfect the work of thine own hands.

Grant me, in this my great trial, a double  
portion of thy Spirit, and lead me, though I  
could not be able to perceive thy guidance,  
to the land of uprightness.

Lord, let not my faith fail. I believe, help  
me out of mine unbelief. For Christ's sake. Amen.



## VIII.

FOR THE PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE;  
 UNION WITH GOD, THROUGH CHRIST,—COM-  
 MUNION WITH HIM BY PRAYER AND DEVOTED  
 MEDITATION,—FOR THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,  
 AND FOR ALL CHRISTIAN MEANS OF GRACE.

Colossians iii. 3. *Our life is hid with Christ in God.*  
 James iv. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw  
 to you.*

Psalms cxix. 54. *Thy statutes have been my song  
 the house of my pilgrimage.*

## REFLECTION.

If it is pleasing to reflect on all the  
 guidance of God during our journey thro-  
 ugh life, and to consider this guidance as a plea-  
 sure that he will lead us, even through the valley  
 of the shadow of death, into the land of upri-  
 ghtness,—it is also delightful to think on  
 many great privileges which he still grants  
 to his chosen,—and to see in them, also, the  
 tokens of their final admission to a still more  
 participation of those rivers of pleasure which  
 are at his right hand for evermore.

PRAYER.

O Lord, be thy name, that thou  
 an everlasting covenant with us,  
 sure mercies of David,—and that,  
 mountains may depart, and the hills  
 d, yet this covenant of thy peace  
 ue.

r gracious purpose, O Father, that  
 ould be made partakers of a divine  
 at we may all be one with thee,  
 rist is one,—and, we are now no lon-  
 ers to the covenant of promise, but  
 ens with the saints and of the house-  
 l.

oe thy name, that thou hast not giv-  
 e spirit of bondage, but the spirit of  
 hereby we cry, Abba, Father.

re depths have I called unto thee,  
 ast heard me. Even before I have  
 a hast answered, and while I have  
 eaking, thou hast heard, and hast  
 unto me, for that which I sought un-

ou hearest the desire of the humble;  
 repare their hearts.

oe thy name, that thou hast also giv-

en unto us the word of reconciliation. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter, also, than honey, and the honey-comb.

Thou hast also given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.

My meditations shall be continually in thy law,—on thy statutes will I meditate day and night.

May thy word be sweet unto my taste, and in its promises may I rest in hope.

Blessed, also, be the Lord God of Jacob, that the tabernacle of God is with men, that he hath set his sanctuary in the midst of them, and will dwell with them for ever.

May thy sabbaths be my delight.

Having been baptised in thy name, make me, like a new-born babe, to desire the sincere milk of the word, that I may grow thereby. Grant me the disposition of a little child, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Thou hast prepared a table before me, and I have eaten with Christ of that bread and wine, which was given by him for the refreshing of the nations.

Help me, O my God, to pay that which I

and may all these blessed ordin-  
 privileges be, to my soul, earnest  
 ral meeting of the just made per-  
 ey shall drink new wine with Christ  
 r's kingdom. Amen.

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IX.

CHRISTIAN GRACES,—FAITH, HOPE,  
 ITY,—AND FOR A HEART IN ALL  
 GHT BEFORE GOD.

3. *That he would grant you, according  
 of his glory, to be strengthened with  
 Spirit in the inner man.*

REFLECTION.

nce of Divine Providence during  
 s,—and all the varied, but con-  
 d discipline which that guidance  
 l, is a beautiful evidence that God  
 tinue to work in us, even amidst  
 distresses which precede death,—  
 itself,—and that this last event is,  
 , but leading us to some grander  
 ie wonderful works and ways of  
 ges of the Gospel carry with them

evidence of the same great truth, for as God has united us to himself, by our union with Christ, and given us the privilege of prayer and of the Holy Scriptures, and of the christian sacraments, he has done all this to nourish seeds of piety in our hearts, and to prepare by all these means, for a final inheritance in kingdom.

The christian *graces*, in so far as they flourish in any heart, are evidences of the grand design: for Faith is the evidence of things not seen; Hope is an anchor to the soul, - anchor cast in heaven, to enable us to pass unharmed through all the storms of life, even through that last tempest which seems destined to wreck every thing that had connected us with earth; and Charity is the greatest of all the very bond of perfectness, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God. It is the earnest, on earth, of our final union with all the good, in that world, where all hatred and discord shall be done away.

#### PRAYER.

Let my heart, O Lord, be purified by thy faith, enable me to live as seeing thee who art invisible, let this be the victory that over

eth the world, even our faith, and being strong in faith, may I look daily not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal.

Grant me faith in him whom thou hast sent to be the Saviour of men,—to whom else but unto him, can I go, for he hath the words of eternal life.

Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

And seeing that we have been begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, let that hope be to me an anchor to my soul sure and steadfast,—entering within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered.

Above all, grant me charity, that most excellent of all gifts, the very bond of perfectness, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before God.

Dispose me to do good to all men, and always to remember, that as the first commandment of the Law is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,—and that on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

*Lord help me also to love my enemies, to*

bleed them that curse me, to pray for them; despitefully use me, and to do good to them that hate me; forbearing and forgiving another in love, even as Christ also has forgiven us.

Make me perfect in every good word and work, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, by a life and conversation becoming the Gospel.

Grant me, O Lord, all these good gifts for Christ's sake. Amen.

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## X.

### UNDER LONG-CONTINUED AND SEVERE TROUBLE

Job vii. 3. *Wearisome nights are appointed to*

#### REFLECTION.

The agonizing and long-continued prayers that sometimes are appointed to man before he leaves this world, are among the most difficult to be accounted for of the Divine dispensations—at least, human impatience when thus severely tried, is apt to suppose, that in all this

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can be nothing good but evil. It seems to us a part of the ways of God little suited to the benevolence of his dispensations, and as it is most trying to the patience of the sufferer, it is often extremely agonizing to those even who witness his trial.

But ought I not to recollect, that there is not a part of my frame, nor any pain that affects it, that is not perfectly known unto God, and treasured up in his book of remembrance,—that many gracious promises are given to those who pass through their trial with patience,—and that as God appointed me this suffering, he has also a time for its removal, which is the very best of all times for myself, if I rightly understand my own good?

PRAYER.

O Lord, bow down thine ear and hear,—open, Lord, thine eyes, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.

I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. In the morning, I say, Would it were even? and at even, Would, God, it were morning? I am



full of tossing to and fro, till the dawning of the day.

Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? is his mercy clean gone forever? But this, O Lord, is mine infirmity,—I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

It is not for me, O Lord, to know the times which the Father hath put in his own power. Yet I know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Therefore, will I rest in the Lord, and patiently wait for him, for it is his hand that hath wrought this.

Even so, O Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight. Amen.

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## XI.

SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL AS TO THE TIME OF OUR DEATH.

Romans xiv. 7, 8. *No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*

*For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

### REFLECTION.

It seems to us a hard thing to be cut off from the land of the living in the midst of our

days. It seems hard to forego the execution of plans on which our hearts were set, and which we believed likely to be useful to mankind,—it is hard to leave friends or dependants for whose welfare we wish to provide,—it is hard to see no more of the plans of divine wisdom, in the progressive advancement of his kingdom in this world,—and, most of all, it is hard to be called to our account, before we have prepared our minds, according to our own idea of preparation, and before we believe ourselves assured of meeting our Judge in peace.

But is it not part of the plan of Providence, that men shall depart from life at all stages of their progress, and from the midst of their most favorite schemes?— and how few are permitted to live to the utmost term of human life?

Cannot God, who calls us from our enjoyments,—from our friends,—or from the view of his progressive plans in time, compensate to us for all this by giving us higher enjoyments, and purer friends, and by opening to us a wider and grander view of his dispensations, in a better state of being?

We think it hard to leave this world in the midst of our days, because our existence then seems to us to be an unfinished and broken

scheme,—and we fancy that we have not accomplished the purposes which Divine Providence intended us to fulfil. But if God has called us, we may be assured that his plan will still go on with respect to us,—and this very breaking up of all our earthly plans, ought to be viewed by us as a pledge, that our present existence is but part of some more extensive scheme, and that, therefore, we are not about to cease to live, but only about to see our destiny carried on under grander and more auspicious circumstances.

## PRAYER.

O God, Father of the spirits of all flesh, thou killest and thou makest alive,—thou bringest down to the grave, and thou bringest up,—thou takest away, and who can hinder thee,—who will say unto thee, What doest thou? Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, we are created,—thou takest away our breath, and we die,—then the dust returneth to the dust as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it.

My soul is bowed down to the dust, it is humbled within me,—my purposes are broken off,—even the thoughts of my heart. I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. Yet must I

be dumb, and open not my mouth, because thou didst it. For thou art righteous, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments,—just and true are all thy ways, O thou King of saints! Who am I, that I should reply against God. Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? I am purposed, that my mouth shall not transgress. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee,—Behold I come, for thou art the Lord, my God.

O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days,—spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.—Thy will be done.

I will be patient in tribulation, seeing it is through faith and patience that we must inherit the promises,—and our present light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us an eternal weight of glory. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed, when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for God himself shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Grant, heavenly Father, that whether I live, I may live unto the Lord,—and whether I die, I may die unto the Lord,—that whether, therefore, I live or die, I may be the Lord's through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,—to whom be glory and dominion from henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.

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## XII.

### AGAINST THE FEAR OF DEATH.

Psalm cxvi. 7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

#### REFLECTION.

Death has been styled the King of Terrors,—and'most men, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Whence arises this fear, which is natural to all créatures, though modified by their various degrees of intelligence, and diversities of rank, in the scale of being?—and what purposes does it serve in the economy of nature?

Some of its causes are no doubt founded on illusion,—such as those which have a reference

to the *humiliating circumstances* with which death is attended. Others of them arise from the *feelings peculiar to the dying*, of the breaking up of their living and organized system;—and others from an *anticipation* of the fearful or mysterious changes to which that breaking up of our connexion with this earth is intended to lead.

But whatever be the cause, the fact is certain and universal,—that God, who knoweth our frame, has entwined with it, for some wise purposes, this natural fear of dissolution. And something of the design of this arrangement it is possible for us to discover. It *guards* our existence during the space allotted to us upon earth, it operates as a constant *prospective check* to the indulgence of such sins as may add to the horrors of the last moments,—but, above all, it is an *intimation* on the part of him who is the Father of our spirits, and the Former of our bodies, not only that our mortal part is about to undergo a great change, but that that change is introductory to other alterations in the state or duration of our being, of a still more momentous nature, of which the awful circumstances that attend our departure from life,—and, more especially, those natural fears by

which this event is preceded, are an earnest omen.

We cannot, then, pretend altogether to conquer the fear of death. Yet blessed be God, that, in the bright prospect opened by the Gospel, we may find consolation even during our descent into the valley of the shadow of death, and that many, with their hearts full of the hopes which the Gospel has inspired, have been able to meet their last moments with this sublime song of triumph, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin,—and the strength of sin is the law,—but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

#### PRAYER.

I know, O Lord, that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. What now is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should seek to prolong my life? My strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me: the joints of my bones are loosed, my knees smite one against another, and I go to the gates of the grave.

Yet will I give glory to the Lord, before he

use darkness,—before my feet stumble upon  
dark mountains.

O Lord, remember not the sins of my youth,  
nor my transgressions, but, according to thy  
mercy, remember thou me, for thy goodness  
sake, O Lord.

May I be enabled to look forward to the  
grave as a bed of rest, and be comforted with  
thy assurance, that as Jesus died and rose  
again, them also that sleep in Jesus shall God  
bring with him.

Though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death, I will fear no evil,—for thou  
art with me, thy rod and staff they comfort me.  
The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom  
all I fear? The Lord is the strength of my  
heart, of whom shall I be afraid?

Mortality shall be swallowed up of life,—the  
greatest enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where  
is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and  
the strength of sin is the law,—but thanks be

to God, who giveth us the victory, through  
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let the words of my mouth, and the medita-  
tions of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight,  
O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Amen.



## XIII.

FOR STRENGTH TO MEET DEATH IN A PROPER  
FRAME OF MIND,—NEITHER PRESUMPTUOUSLY  
NOR IN DESPAIR.

Luke ii. 29. *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart  
in peace.*

## REFLECTION.

Alas! how little do I know with certainty of my own character! How often, during the progress of life, have events shown me, that when I thought myself strong I was weak, that there has been much that was doubtful even in my best actions, and that I could not say assuredly for what particular place I was fit, or what situation in the succession of events I was destined to hold!

And how little reason then have I to presume that I am capable of saying what is to be my future station in the vast scheme of the divine dominions, or whether, indeed, I shall be found at last to have been worthy of honor or of humiliation!

This thought ought to save me from presumption; but surely there is great guilt in *doubting* of the forgiving grace of God. He

lity is becoming only when it is accompanied with a proper sense of divine mercy; and the deepest contrition for offences can have no good effect upon the heart, but in so far as it is consecrated by a corresponding feeling, that these offences may be blotted out.

How blessed a thing, then, is it for man, whether to be presumptuous nor despairing, but to meet the last and greatest of all trials with a well-ordered spirit, which is to him who is rewarded by it, an earnest of the promised inheritance.

PRAYER.

O let thy servant depart in peace, and let mine eyes see thy salvation,—that when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, death may be swallowed up in victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, remember me for good, and supply my need, according to thy riches in glory, Christ Jesus.

Support me, O Lord, in the hour when my art and strength fail. When I pass through the waters, be thou with me, and through the floods, let them not overflow me. When I

walk through the fire, let me not be burned, neither let the flame kindle upon me.

Grant me, O Lord, the consolation which thou givest to thy chosen, and like them may I be enabled to say, Now am I ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me at his coming; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing.

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

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#### XIV.

FOR AN EXEMPLARY DEATH.—OR A GOOD NAME  
IN DEATH.

Psalm cxii. 6. *The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*

#### REFLECTION.

A good name, said the wise man, is better than precious ointment; and the day of death *than the day of our birth.*

Why did the wise man thus unite a good name with the superiority of the day of death to the day of life?

Was it not to intimate to us, that it is at death that the value of a good name is chiefly realized,—or that it is then like a precious ointment, by which our names are embalmed in recollections of the living?

And oh! what an awful thing it is for a man to think that he shall leave a bad name after him!—that he shall thus dishonor his christian profession,—tarnish that blessed name by which he is called;—and do despite to the Spirit of God!

How pleasant, on the other hand, is it for a man to think, that his good name shall live after him!—not to gratify any feelings of vanity which he may now cherish, from a delusive belief that he shall then be in a condition to be rewarded with the flattering testimony of men, to show to others who still live, that there is something true, and honorable, and of good report, in the profession which he had adopted, and in the conduct to which it led him.

This is, indeed, the most precious of all legacies to our memory; and it is, also, one of the best services we can do to Christianity, to teach *others*, even after we are gone,

how pleasant and full of honor are those paths that lead to peace in time, and to happiness in eternity.

We thus serve the cause of Christ even after death, and continue to influence the progress of his kingdom upon earth, after we ourselves have ceased to have any part in all the things that are done under the sun.

PRAYER.

Enable me, O Lord, in all things to adorn the doctrine of God, my Saviour, by a life and conversation becoming the Gospel.

While I live, may I live unto the Lord, and when I die, may I die unto the Lord; living or dying, may I be the Lord's.

May the very God of peace sanctify me wholly, and build me up in faith and love, until the day of my complete redemption.

And let me not fail, O God, when tried to the uttermost. May others take knowledge of me, that I have been with Jesus. May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his.

Grant me, O God, that good name which is better than precious ointment,—may I leave it as an inheritance to my children's children

**Oh!** let not my sins be remembered against me, but wherein I have done well, may my well-doing be to the praise and glory of thy blessed name, who hast wrought in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure.

Now, may the God of all grace perfect me in every good word and work, and make me a chosen vessel unto him, and may I be instrumental in his hand, by the good name which I leave behind me in maintaining for him a seed upon the earth, through coming ages.

Grant this, O Lord, and let it in all things be unto me according to thy word. For Christ's sake. Amen.



## XV.

**FOR THOSE WHO ARE NEAR AND DEAR TO US.**

*John xvii. 2. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.*

### REFLECTION.

**Even on the verge of the eternal world, and of its boundless prospects, the heart still re-**

verts, with a natural feeling of anxiety, to the future earthly interests of those with whom we have been connected, by holy and by intimate ties, in this world.

And this feeling has been sanctioned by the highest of all examples,—for did not Christ, when on the cross, exemplify the influence of this sentiment, when, beholding his mother and the disciple whom he loved, he said, *Woman, behold thy son,—son, behold thy mother?*

God also, by his spirit of inspiration, has condescended to soothe this feeling, by reminding those whom he is calling to himself, that in obeying this call they may trust their widows to him, for he will preserve them, and their fatherless children, for he will provide for them.

#### PRAYER.

In thee, O Lord, the fatherless findeth mercy.

Thou hast taught me from my youth up,—and all thy thoughts towards me have been thoughts of kindness.

Thou wert the God of our fathers, and of the old time before them,—they trusted in thee,

ere not confounded, and thou hast at all a regard to the work of thine own hands. w, O Lord, thou callest, and I must an- hee,—thou takest away my breath, and an hinder thee?

. blessed be thy name, because thou hast usly said, Leave thy fatherless children e, I will preserve them, and let thy wid- ust in me.

ke the young to know the God of their fa- and to serve him with a perfect heart and ing mind.

serve them from youthful lusts,—and that from their childhood they may know criptures, which are able to make them into salvation.

e them the ornament of a meek and qui- rit,—deliver them from every evil work, reserve them unto thy heavenly kingdom. nfort all who mourn, give unto them y for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, e garment of praise for the spirit of heav-

ide all who have been near and dear to y thy counsel, and afterwards receive to glory.

d now, O Father, I come to thee, keep



those who are in the world by thy truth,—may the young remember their Creator and serve the Lord with singleness of heart, that thou mayest command thy blessing on them, even that blessing which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith.

And may the aged be comforted with the consolations of thy Spirit, which are neither few nor small, and at last may they be brought to the grave like a shock of corn in its season.

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

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## XVI.

FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE DIVINE KINGDOM  
UPON EARTH AFTER WE ARE DEPARTED.

Psalm cxlv. 4. 11. *One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom.*

### REFLECTION.

It is a beautiful characteristic of that prayer which Christ taught his disciples, that its first and general petitions, are all for the advance-

ment of the divine kingdom in the world.—Hallowed be thy name,—thy kingdom come,—thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

That is to say, may all men perceive and acknowledge their subjection to thee,—may hatred, malice, tyranny, impurity, and every thing that is hostile to the best interests of thy dominions be destroyed,—may love, freedom, knowledge, purity, and heavenly-mindedness—every thing, in short, that is favorable to the best state of this world, and of the human race, be promoted, and obtain a wider influence among men,—and thus may the condition of this earth gradually become more and more like that of those purer and higher regions, where all the principles of goodness are observed with more steadfast obedience, and are displayed on a grander scale.

This progress of the divine kingdom, then, should be the object of our exertions, while we are laboring in health and strength,—this should be our daily prayer while we are in the world,—and this ought to form the wish nearest to our hearts, when we are about to bid farewell to every thing on earth.

## PRAYER.

Let thy way, O Lord, be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Give thy Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Let the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

Hasten the time when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth,—when nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, nor kingdom against kingdom,—but when swords shall be beaten into plough-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks, and men shall learn war no more.

Hear, Lord, the sighing of the prisoner, and free them that are doomed to die. Let the captives be delivered, and the chain of the oppressor be broken. Let all men love as brethren, and dwell together in unity.

In every place let incense and a pure offering be presented unto thee, and from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, let all flesh bless thy holy name.

Over all the earth let there be one fold and one shepherd.

*Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be*

ame,—thy kingdom come,—thy will be on earth, as it is done in heaven. Amen.

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XVII.

L ANTICIPATION,—OF THE GRAND PLANS DIVINE PROVIDENCE WHICH SHALL BE DISSEMINATED TO US HEREAFTER,—OF A MEETING WITH CHRIST IN HIS MEDIATORIAL GLORY,—OF MEETING WITH THE JUST MADE PERFECT,—AN ETERNITY OF PROGRESSIVE HAPPINESS AND IMPROVEMENT.

tion v. 11. *And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.*

REFLECTION.

s but a small part of a plan of boundless extent and of eternal duration, that we have been permitted to witness during the short period of our pilgrimage on earth,—and we cannot look back upon life without being convinced at the mysterious courses of Divine Providence are to be continued, with respect to us, on a yet greater scale, when this mortal shall

have put on immortality, and this corruptible has been clothed with incorruption.

Yes, thy kingdom, O God, is an everlasting kingdom, and of thy government there shall be no end. May I not then devoutly expect, that whatever has been dark in the Divine dispensations towards me, shall soon be cleared up,—and that, instead of all my repinings and doubts respecting the past ways of God, I shall have reason only to admire and to adore that boundless wisdom, and goodness, which have been making all things conducive to my perfect happiness in other and greater portions of my immortal history?

May I not also expect to see him, 'whom having not seen on earth, I have yet loved; and in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory?' What a subject of triumph, to be admitted to the presence of him 'who loved me, and gave himself for me,'—to meet him, not as 'the man of sorrows' but as my glorified Redeemer, who is ready at once to grant me forgiveness of my offences, and to place on my head the crown of victory! Which, of all the friends of our race, is so worthy an object of desire; and, oh! why should I refuse to de-

part, with so great an introduction in prospect?

And shall not also the just made perfect, who have successively left this earth, be united in one grand assembly? Am I not then going not to the dead but to the living,—to the company of Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apostles, and Martyrs, and Saints,—to the great and good who have benefitted their fellow-creatures in time,—to the yet greater assembly of the humble, and devout, and faithful, who moved in a path unnoticed by men, but who were great in the sight of God, because they diligently improved the trust committed to them, and whose names were, therefore, written in the book of life?

Above all, may I not now look forward with great joy to an eternity of progressive happiness and improvement,—to higher displays of the works and ways of God, than eye has ever seen, or ear heard, or the imagination of man is now capable of conceiving.—Yes—there shall be no more death, neither sighing nor tears,—but a glorious and never-ending course of improvement in knowledge, and goodness, and happiness,—eternal services rendered to the intelligent kingdom of God and increasing measures

of exaltation and of power, throughout the boundless ages of eternity.

PRAYER.

The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, all his saints, in all places of his dominions, bless the Lord, O my soul.

Now, I see through a glass darkly,—but hereafter I shall see light clearly,—now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known.

I know, O Lord, that all thy ways are right, for even in time, that which I once knew not, thou hast often taught me by the course of events,—and this is to me a token, that there are yet greater things than these,—and that thy work shall appear to have been perfect, when I shall see the things that are to be hereafter.

And blessed be thy name, O Lord, that when Jesus, our forerunner, ascended up on high, all power was given to him in heaven and on earth, that he is the head over all things to the church, which is his body,—that he is gone to prepare a place for his followers,—and that *where he is, there shall they be also.*

Blessed were they who saw the face of the Son of Man, and heard his voice, while he dwelt on earth, full of grace and truth. But blessed, far more blessed shall they be who shall see him as he now is, and who shall be made like him,—having purified themselves, even as he is pure.

Oh! that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest. Lord Jesus receive my spirit,—and grant that I may be acknowledged as thine, when thou comest in thy kingdom.

Our fathers, where are they?—and the Prophets have not lived for ever. But thou art the God, not of the dead but of the living, and there is a great company, which no man can number, of all ages and countries, who now stand before the throne, and who sing, Blessing, and honor, and praise, be to him that hath redeemed us, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God for ever.

Let my soul, O Lord, be gathered to the company of thy redeemed.

The hour, O Lord, is approaching, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,—the earth, also, and the works that are



therein, shall be burnt up. Nevertheless, we, according to thy promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

There shall be no more need of the sun, neither of the light of the moon,—but the Lamb himself shall feed us, and lead us to living fountains, and behold all things shall have become new.

Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none that I desire beside thee,—thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,—and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Amen.

**SERIES OF PRAYERS FOR THE USE OF THE  
SICK,—ON THE SAME PLAN WITH THE PRE-  
CEDING,—BUT NOT CONFINED TO THE LAN-  
GUAGE OF SCRIPTURE.**

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**Im xix. 14.** 'Let the words of my mouth and the  
meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O  
Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.'

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**I.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR ALL THE GOODNESS THAT  
HAS FOLLOWED US THROUGH LIFE.**

**alm cxlv. 9.** *The Lord is good unto all, and his ten-  
der mercies are over all his works.*

**O Thou, who art the hearer of prayer, unto  
whom shall all flesh come.**

**And blessed, O heavenly Father, be thy  
name, that thy Throne of Grace is ever open to  
those who call upon thee in sincerity,—for thou  
doest only *permitterest*, but *invitest*, and hast com-**

manded, all thy children, whether in their seasons of distress or of prosperity to make known their requests unto thee, and thou hast declared, that even when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and returneth unto thee by prayer and supplication, thou wilt in no wise cast him out.

Blessed, for ever blessed be thy name, for this great privilege and high honor which thou hast granted to all thy children. O let my heart be now enlarged before thee,—and while I offer unto thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving for all the goodness that has followed me through life, let my offering be acceptable in thy sight. O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

Now, then, O Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, now am I prostrate at the footstool of thy throne, and with a truly thankful heart, I offer unto thee my acknowledgements for all the manifold and never-ceasing loving-kindness which thou hast made to pass before me in the land of the living.

Thou gavest me my place among thine intelligent creatures, thou openedst mine eyes to behold this glorious portion of thine unbounded dominions, thy good providence had prepared for me, before I came into existence, all the advantages which that existence has conferred

on me, and by thee have I been holden up from the womb.

Thou hast given me many friends in life, with whom I have taken sweet counsel together, I have enjoyed the high privilege of a christian education, I have, from my youth, been made acquainted with the Scriptures, and have known the great things which thou hast done for mankind, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and I have been permitted to rank myself among his disciples, and to entertain the blessed and glorious hope of yet seeing him, in some greater world, as he now is.

Wonderful indeed, O Lord, has been thy providential goodness towards me. At all times thou hast led me, as by the hand, through paths which mine own wisdom could not have chosen for myself, thou hast often prevented me from falling into evils which mine own folly would have disposed me to incur, and I can now perceive, that even where I imagined that I was the sole disposer of mine own fate, all things have been working together under thy superintending wisdom, for the eventual disclosure of that purpose, which, as a subject of thy government, I was meant to serve.

Even the afflictions and the disasters of life have all *been* overruled to me for good,—and

while I thought not so, neither did my heart intend it, thou hast made even 'my backslidings to reprove me,' and hast often made me come out of great tribulation, like gold that was refined.

Yes, O my Father, it is the purpose of all thy dispensations to bring 'good out of evil,' and O help me now to believe,\* that even this last and greatest of all my earthly endurances, is meant to be subservient to the same gracious purpose, if I am not‡ wanting to myself. Enable me, therefore, to bear my trial, with a becoming trust in that goodness and tender mercy which has †so abundantly been manifested towards me during all the previous portions of my existence, and, oh! let me never suppose that thou, who hast been my helper and my friend through life, wilt now desert me, when my strength is weakest, and when my need of thine assistance is most urgent. Rather, O my God, support me in the belief that all these things are working together to me for good, and that as the mystery of thy providential guidance has not been completed towards me in this world, it is only because it is thy purpose, by means of that darkness and sore endurance which has now fallen on me, event-

to lead me into that 'land of uprightness,'  
and all shadows shall have passed away.  
Accept, O Lord, this, the offering of my  
faithfulness and trust, for Christ's sake.

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## II.

## CONFESSION OF SIN.

*Psalm xxvii. 13. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

Hold me, O Lord, in this season of my  
affliction, and enable me, with a truly  
contrite heart, to make confession of my sins.  
Search me, O Lord, and try my ways, and  
if there be any wicked way in me, and lead  
me the way everlasting.

Alas! O my God, I blush and am unable to  
lift up my face before thee, for I have done in-  
iquity from my youth up,—I have committed  
many 'presumptuous sins,' and my foolish heart  
has become darkened, by departing from the  
presence of God.

God forgive the impure thoughts, the un-  
stable feelings, the violent and hasty deeds,

the utter recklessness of thy displeasure which I have so often been guilty,—blot out a cloud mine iniquities, and as a thief steal away my sins, and let not my transgressions be brought in judgment against me.

I have had great blessings conferred on me, and have enjoyed many advantages in my life, with distinguished success, in the obedience of thy commandment. Alas! what might my life have been, if I had properly felt and understood my true interest,—and how my present life compared with what it now is, might have been, at the season of my departure, had I entertained but a moderate regard to the intimacy and familiarity with which thou hast favored me.

Yes, O my God, my sins have been aggravated, for they have been done in the face of much light,—contempt of many great blessings,—and in defiance of manifold warnings which thou hast from time to time given me,—not only by the declarations of thy blessed word, but by the events of thy Providence, and by the secret whispers with which thou often hast descended to intimate to man the danger of his conduct.

O my God, correct me, but not in anger; chasten me, but not in hot displeasure; show me my sins, but, oh! show me also the

ness of thy tender mercy,—and, while I am truly humbled for mine iniquities, enable me to take comfort from the thought, that thou knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are but dust,—and that thou ‘dwest with the man who is humble and of a contrite heart.’

Forbid, O Lord, that any hypocrisy or self-deceit should have mingled with this act of making confession of mine iniquities; let me not presume to think that thou canst be deluded respecting the real state of my conduct or views,—O grant me that true contrition to which the promise of forgiveness has been made in thy word,—and as an earnest of thy pardoning mercy, let my soul now rest in hope, and let my humbled but penitent heart feel something of ‘the blessedness of the man to whom thou wilt not impute sin.’

‘Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.’ ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants.’

Into thy hands, O merciful Father of men, I commit my spirit. Have compassion on me, for thy blessed Son’s sake. Amen.



## III.

EXULTATION IN THE THOUGHT OF DIVINE  
MERCY.

Ezekiel xviii. 23. *Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live.*

Yes, O my God, I will sing of mercy and of judgment.

Thy mercy droppeth like the dew,—and distilleth like the rain upon the face of this earth. Thou hast made known thyself to man, as the 'Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to thee and live.'

But still, O God, thou art our Father,—and this is thy name and thy memorial to all generations. I will, therefore, come unto thee under this endearing character;—and I will plead before thee thy gracious declaration, that 'as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,—for he knoweth our frames, he remembereth that we are but dust. As far, therefore, as the east is from the west, so far wilt thou remove our transgressions from us.'

And blessed be thy name, that to give us a

sible token of this mercy, thou hast sent thy beloved Son to dwell among us,—to be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,—and to publish to mankind the gracious intimation that whosoever cometh unto thee through him, thou wilt in no wise cast out.

For a further assurance thou hast also given to us the ministry of reconciliation,—and hast sent thy messengers into all lands to make known the joyful sound.’ How beautiful, O our God, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring glad tidings,—that publish the good news,—that cry unto the inhabitants of the earth, Behold your God!

Though, therefore, I have grievously sinned, yet will I rejoice in the thought, that thou hast no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he would turn from his wickedness and live.

Yet, O Lord, let me not be presumptuous in my trust,—but may I always bear in mind, that there is an awful as well as a pleasing aspect of thy dispensations,—and that, as thou delightest to dwell with ‘the man who is humble and of a contrite heart,’—thou also takest vengeance on the proud, and hidest thy face from the man who presumptuously offends.

O Lord, look on me in the face of thine Anointed,—and give me that truly humble

trite heart, in which thou hast p

O save me from despair,—a  
review my failures with a broke  
to join the anthem of the Ange  
ced thy great love to man, and  
God in the highest, on earth p  
to men.

Surely, O God, thou art my  
thy paternal bosom I commit :  
for time and for eternity.

Fulfil, O Lord, the desire of:  
beloved Son's sake. Amen.

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#### IV.

#### FOR PROPER VIEWS OF CHRIST AND AS AN INTERCESSOR WITH

*Hebrews ii. 17. In all things it beho  
like unto his brethren, that he might  
faithful High Priest in things per  
make reconciliation for the sins of*

O Lord, I have sinned, and in  
short of the duty which thou h  
what shall I do unto thee, O th  
men! Wherewithal shall I c  
Lord,—er what offering will he

is an atonement for the offences which I committed against him! Thou hast sent him in the likeness of man,—that he might be made obedient to God, who should take away the sin of the world. Lord, it is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Oh! thou Supreme Fountain of all purity and holiness, how far removed am I and all the children of the dust from the glory of thy presence—and how can sinful and mortal man presume to hope that his feeble prayers shall find acceptance before the throne of grace!

Blessed then, O my God, is the intimacy that we have an Advocate with the Father,—Jesus Christ the righteous, 'that we have a High Priest ordained for men in things pertaining to God,' 'one who can have compassion on our infirmities, ignorant, and them who are out of the way, and who ever liveth to make intercession

for us. Heavenly Father, grant me true faith in Jesus Christ whom thou hast thus set forth as the Saviour and the Intercessor with God for men. If in any respect, my faith be erroneous or my confidence of trust insecure, Lord, teach me what is true and not, correct in my understanding and mercifully impart whatever is amiss, supply all!

wants, and let the entire state of my mind and heart be such as thou requirest.

And oh! grant me, if it be thy will, all peace and joy in believing, that assurance of faith which results from a full belief that Christ is not only able but willing to save to the uttermost all them that come unto him, and that I may therefore trust all my concerns for time and for eternity to his affectionate and merciful disposal.

May my faith be of that kind which purifies the heart, which worketh by love, and which is fruitful of good works.

Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

Merciful Friend,—Saviour,—and Intercessor of mankind, save me from my sins, and let my prayers ascend in sweet memorial before God, being made acceptable, for thy sake, in his sight.

Lord Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Amen.

V.

STRENGTH TO IMITATE CHRIST IN THE ENDURANCE OF HIS SORROWS.

xii. 1. *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated on the right hand of the throne of God.*

O Lord, I am called to my last and greatest trial, the fears of death have encompassed me, thou, who hast proved me by manifold trials during life, art now leading me to that endurance which must prepare my spiritual change.

Help me to remember that Christ Jesus our Lord was also a 'man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' 'that he suffered, being in the form of a servant, and that, by his mode of enduring his sufferings, he has left us an example that we should follow his steps.

Help me, therefore, like him to bow with submission to whatever thou mayest see fit to require of me, and when my soul is 'exceedingly sorrowful even unto death,' Lord, help me, O divine Master to say, 'Not my will, but thine be done.'

Like him, also, may I be gentle and forbearing to those who are about me, and when all their cares and attention are unable to alleviate the pangs which I am called to sustain, oh! let me not fret nor be impatient, but rather let me be disposed, like my divine Master, to say, 'The spirit indeed is willing, though the flesh is weak.'

Like the Captain of salvation, may I also be enabled firmly to advance even to my last trial, seeing it is through that only that the soul of man can enter into rest; and having fulfilled all duty, may I be enabled to regard even the offering up of my life, as but the perfecting of that sacrifice of obedience which thou requirest of all who shall be partakers of thy kingdom.

And thus following the example of my Redeemer in suffering and in death, may I be enabled like him to vanquish even the last enemy, and finally to sit down with him on his throne, even as he also overcame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hear this, O Lord, my humble prayer, and grant me the strength which I have not of myself, for my Redeemer's sake. Amen.

## VI.

## FOR THE INFLUENCES OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT.

**Ephesians i. 13, 14.** *That Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.*

Alas! O God, I am not able of myself to think a good thought, or to speak a good word,—and all my attempts at offering unto thee the sacrifice of a renewed heart would be unavailing, unless thou shouldst see fit to aid me by thy purifying and strengthening spirit.

But it is my consolation to think, that thou dost give thy Holy Spirit to them that ask it,—and that Jesus Christ our Lord promised this Comforter to be with his followers in all ages to the end of the world.

Thou workest in ways which man cannot foresee,—and the assistances of thy Holy Spirit are identified with those providential occurrences which make up the earthly history of those whom thou hast chosen.

Thou hast often *directed* me in times past, when I could not discern mine own path, and thou hast frequently *turned me aside* from ways which I would have chosen for myself, but which, if pursued, would eventually have led me to destruction.



By many *secret hints* thou hast taught me in silence, when I walked by the way, and when I sat in the house, when I lay down, and when I rose up;—and by all this guidance and instruction thou hast shown, that thou hast a gracious purpose in view for me, and wert not willing that I should be altogether abandoned to myself.

And wilt thou not, then, also teach, and strengthen, and uphold me, in this my greatest need, when my own light is darkest, and my own strength is failing? Yes, O Lord, thou wilt complete the work of thine own hands,—thou wilt perfect that which concerneth me.

O, then, send forth thy light and thy truth,—let them lead me, and guide and conduct me into the land of uprightness.

Destroy in me every root of evil, adorn me with all the ornaments of a perfect man in Christ, and thus purify and prepare my spirit for its great change, and for entering on those enduring scenes where the pure in heart shall see God.

Lord, thou hearest the desire of the humble; thou wilt grant their request. Be merciful unto me, and bless me for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

## VII.

FOR FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY, AND GENERALLY FOR  
A HEART SINCERELY DISPOSED TO ALL THAT  
IS GOOD.

Galatians v. 22. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,  
long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,  
temperance.*

HEAVENLY FATHER,

Let thy good spirit adorn me with all the  
graces that perfect the man of God. Grant  
me that faith which is the evidence of things  
not seen, the substance of things hoped for,—  
that high and holy spirit which is influenced by  
views higher than any which time and its con-  
cerns can present,—which reposes with im-  
plicit trust, in the wisdom and benevolence of  
all thy dispensations,—and which is especially  
actuated by the belief, that even suffering and  
death itself shall never separate those who do  
well, from the love of God.

Grant me, also, a disposition to look humbly  
beyond all temporal things to the glory which  
is yet to be revealed,—enable me to rejoice in  
hope,—being fully persuaded that though 'after  
my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my

flesh shall I see God;’—and that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor is the heart of man able to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Grant me fervent charity to the whole offspring of God. O take away from me all narrow and all selfish views and feelings. May I love all men as brethren, and be kind and forbearing even to those who have done me wrong. ‘Charity never faileth;’ therefore, O God, grant me this most excellent gift, the very bond of perfectness, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before God; and let it be to me in time an earnest of my final obtaining of that inheritance which thou hast reserved for all them that love thee.

Take away from my heart every thing that is low, insincere, or double-minded. Alas! O Lord, the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and no man can tell how much that is wrong enters into even the best offerings which his soul can present unto thee. O grant me a ‘true and honest heart,’—‘search me and try my ways, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’

‘Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight.

ord, my strength and my Redeemer.'  
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VIII.

FOR PATIENCE IN SORE TROUBLE.

viii. 3, 4. *O that I knew where I might find thee!  
I might come even to thy seat! I would order my  
se before thee, and fill my mouth with arguments.*

ther of my spirit, and Former of my body,  
hom I have been fearfully and wonderfully  
e, thou hast seen fit to try me, even as  
r is tried,—my soul cleaveth to the dust,  
ones are racked with pain, and the multi-  
of my bones with sore pain; I have found  
w and trouble.

the morning I say, When will it be even-  
and in the evening, Would God, it were  
ing? and I am full of tossings to and fro,  
ie dawning of the day.

it who, O Lord, am I that I should reply  
ist thee? 'Shall the thing formed say to  
that formed it, Why hast thou made me  
'? No affliction befalleth man that is not  
ined by thee,—'all my tears are in thy bot-  
are they not written in thy book?'—my

most secret pain, even in the silence of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, is observed and registered by thee,—and thou hast thine own time for the removal of trouble, which time is, in every case, the best for the final welfare of thy creatures.

Yet thou knowest, O God, how hard it is for man to bear patiently those sore agonies which bow him down to the dust, and blessed be thy name, that thou dost also pour balm into the wounds by which thy creatures are afflicted—that thou givest unto us many compensating blessings, and that thy throne of grace is ever open, at the footstool of which we may pour out our requests, and be assured that thou hearest us.

O let me not *presumptuously* demand relief; but rather let me patiently and quietly wait for it; for thou actest by means and in ways which the understanding of man cannot foresee, and, in thy good time, thou makest all things work together for good to them who love thee.

Strengthen me, O Lord, for this great endurance,—let me not be tried beyond my strength,—grant me all peace and hope in believing,—and, oh! let no repining or rebellious thought mingle with the trial, by which thou intendest that my soul should be purified.

Surely, O Lord, thou knowest our frame, thou rememberest that we are but dust, and as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for without thy secret and sustaining aid, 'the spirits would fail before thee, and the souls which thou hast made.'

Help me, then, O Lord, to be patient in tribulation, and though my trial should be sore and of long continuance, O let patience have her perfect work; since it is through much tribulation, that we must enter into the kingdom of heaven, and our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are intended to work out for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Be merciful unto me, then, O my God, for my soul trusteth in thee,—yea, 'in the shadow of thy wings will I take refuge, until these calamities be overpast.' Amen.

## IX.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE NEAR AND DEAR TO US.

Jeremiah xlix. 11. *Leave thy fatherless children, I will will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.*

Father of the fatherless, Judge of the widow, Comforter and Friend of those who have none to help them! O hear me, while in the view of leaving this world, I now bequeath the interests of those who have been my chief care in life, to thy merciful and fatherly protection.

And, O Lord, how consolatory is it to think that we have such a Protector, to whom interests so dear to us may be intrusted, for thou hast been a *providing* and a *directing* God to myself, and it would be the height of ingratitude in me not to rely, with implicit confidence, on the same promised goodness towards those who have been most near and dear to me in time.

Thou hast also given us a sure word of promise, to which we may trust, for thou hast said, 'Leave thy fatherless children to me, I will preserve them, and let thy widows trust in me.'

Comfort then, O God, the hearts of those in whom I am chiefly interested, when I am no

more, let them not sorrow for my departure with any excessive or unchristian grief, but enable them to bow with becoming resignation to thine appointments, and thus may my death become to them a blessing.

Prosper them in all that may yet await them in this world, give them such measures of health and of comfort as thou mayest see fit for them, and, oh! let them not meet with any of those great disasters which too much bow down the spirit that endures them.

Especially, O God, prosper their spiritual and eternal interests. Grant them all good and amiable dispositions, let them be ornaments of the Christian profession, and living examples of the efficacy of divine truth, and, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless, may they enjoy that peace in time which 'this world can neither give nor take away.

And as trouble is part of the lot that is given unto all men under the sun, O sanctify to them whatever distresses thou mayst appoint for them, let them not be the instruments in any case, of procuring disasters for themselves, and when they are tried, may they come like gold from the furnace, and thus may all things work together to them for good.

May the young be early inclined to do thy will,



may those who are struggling with the labors of life consider themselves as serving thee, and may the aged be comforted with the consolations of thy spirit, and be prepared for 'the inheritance of the just made perfect.'

And thus, O Father, may we each, in our appointed time, be enabled to 'die the death of the righteous,' and being gathered to our fathers in peace, and leaving behind us a good name on earth, may we all meet at last in thy presence, where there is fulness of joy, and be for ever united—'a family in heaven.'

In this blessed hope I now resign all their interests and mine own to thy fatherly disposal, for time and for eternity, and to thy name be praise, world without end. Amen.

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## X.

FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE DIVINE KINGDOM  
UPON EARTH.

Matthew vi. 10. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.*

Blessed, O Lord, be thy name, that thou hast permitted me to see this beautiful portion of thy dominions, and to witness some displays of that

wisdom, and goodness, and power, by which thou conductest thy grand and wonderful dispensations.

Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth to all generations. Though, therefore, men successively disappear, yet thy work is continued, and thou wilt finally evolve thy gracious plans for the ultimate manifestation of thy boundless goodness.

And, O my God, what wonderful things are yet to happen upon earth, during the many generations that are hereafter to come forth! Hasten, O heavenly Father, the time, when violence and wrath shall cease among men, when war shall be no more—when the slave shall be freed from his fetters, and when all men shall acknowledge equal and mutual rights in all who bear the same divine image.

Let pure and undefiled religion every where prevail, enlighten mankind more and more in those great truths which pertain to life and to salvation, put an end to superstition and error over the whole face of the habitable earth, and let 'incense and a pure offering be presented unto thee from the rising to the setting sun.'

May liberal knowledge, sound policy, equal laws, and an improved practice of all the arts that beautify and bless life, more and more

vail, and thus may men more universally be made partakers of those blessings which thou hast qualified them, by their nature, to attain and to enjoy.

Above all, O God, destroy all gross vice and immorality. may pure manners, and innocent pleasures, and submissive reverence for all thine appointments become the general characteristics of mankind; and may all nations be animated by the glorious emulation of being children of God, and 'fellow workers' with Thee for the perfection of thy dominions.

May the wilderness and the solitary place be glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom like the rose.

Thus, O God, may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. For Christ's sake. Amen.

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## XI.

### FOR SUPPORT DURING THE LAST STRUGGLES.

Psalm lxxiii. 26 *My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

I know, O God, that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

**I shall soon go the way whence I shall not return.**

**Lord, let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.**

**Let me not be tried above what I am able to bear. Be thou with me when the floods encompass me, and when the waters cover me, let them not overwhelm me. Stretch forth, O God thy hand, and save me in mine extremity, and shorten, if it be thy will, the severity of the trial through which I must enter into rest.**

**Grant me the peace of the man to whom thou wilt not impute sin, and considering this last trial as part of the lot that has been given unto all the children of men, may I be enabled, in humble confidence in thy mercy, and with firm faith in my Redeemer, to say, now my race is completed, and my warfare is accomplished, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life.'**

**O God, thou knowest how feeble is the strength of man. Grant me an earnest of thy support in the calmness with which I am enabled to meet my last enemy.**

**When my heart and my strength fail, be thou the strength of my heart, and my portion for**

Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. Be merciful unto me, and strengthen me, for my Redeemer's sake. Amen.

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## XII.

FOR A GOOD NAME AFTER DEATH, AND AN EXEMPLARY TERMINATION OF LIFE.

Ecclesiastes vii. 1. *A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.*

Now, O Lord, I am called to the last struggle, not only in the sight of angels, but of men, and my friends and neighbors will take notice of me how I acquit myself in this last trial.

Take away from me all unbecoming regard to the opinions of mankind, but yet, O God, enable me so to meet my end, that others may take knowledge of me that I have been a disciple of Jesus.

Let no evil report now arise against me, nor any thing appear in my conduct that may lessen the respectability of my character, and shake the faith of others in the efficacy of christ-

tian principles and hopes. Forbid, O God, that I should be an offence unto any, or that in any part of my conduct I should give cause to the enemies of the faith to blaspheme.

Rather, O God, may I leave a name behind me which will be a precious memorial to those with whom I have been connected in life, and may they have cause to look back to the termination of my course with the placid belief that I have lived and died in the faith.

May I give evidence to the world that my profession has been maintained steadfast unto the end, and that I have indeed felt the true influence of christian principles, by not only continuing under their guidance during life, but by meeting death by their assistance.

Thus, O Lord, may I be useful, even after I have left this world, in promoting the interests of thy kingdom among men, and may others, comforted by the recollection of my end, be induced to persevere in those ways which make the termination of life a source of hope.

Pardon me, O Lord, if in this or in any other part of my petitions I have been influenced by a presumptuous belief of my own worthiness,—and look on me only in the face of thine Anointed. Amen.

## XIII.

FOR TRUST IN GOD, WHATEVER MAY BE  
NATURE OF THE PAST TRIALS.

Job xiii. 15. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in*

I have presumed, O Lord, to ask of thee that thou wouldst enable me to meet my enemies in peace,' and that no trial too hard for flesh and blood may be imposed on me.

Yet, O my God, let me not forget that the ways in trying thy children are beyond the scrutiny of our understandings, and that thou hast reserved unto thine own disposal the means by which thou hast determined to call thy children unto thyself.

Thou dost sometimes, therefore, try the hearts and strength of thy best beloved before thou grantest them relief, and they are made a wonder unto all who witness their endurance.

Let me not then despair, though I too should be called to a similar trial, but rather let my trust in thy dispensations be unbroken, from a assured belief, that whom thou lovest thou chastisest, and correctest every son whom thou receivest.

Yes, O Lord, even the excellent ones of the earth have sometimes had a harder fate in death than those who have not kept thy law; those even who have borne witness unto the truth above all other men, have been persecuted, insulted, tormented,—and they who now shine brightest in thy kingdom ‘have come out of great tribulation.’

Though, therefore, my trial should be hard, and long, and apparently degrading, yea, though I should seem to be deserted of God in my utmost need, O let not my faith in the goodness of thy nature, and in the righteousness of thy dispensations, be broken down, but rather may I be enabled to say, None of these things move me, for I know and am persuaded, that neither sufferings nor reproach, nor life, nor death, nor things present nor things to come, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.



## XIV.

FOR A BLESSED IMMORTALITY,—WITH  
ULTIMATE ANTICIPATION OF THE GRANTS  
THAT ARE YET TO BE DISCLOSED IN  
HEAVEN AND IN THE MORAL KINGDOM.

*Psalm ciii. 23. The Lord hath prepared his  
the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.*  
*Psalm xxxi. 9. With thee is the fountain of  
light shall we see light.*

Soon, O God, I shall close my eye  
to the things that are done under the  
blessed be thy name, that thou permit  
me to look for 'new heavens and a new earth  
in dwelleth righteousness.'

I have hitherto seen but a small part  
of thy works. Yet these are of surpassing  
beauty, and richly display thy wisdom, and  
thy goodness. But oh! what scenes are  
open upon the view of those who shall  
leave off this mortal tabernacle, and shall be  
allowed to contemplate the wide extent of  
thy glorious dominions!

It is but an inconsiderable portion of  
thy wonderful dispensations that have as yet been  
manifest to me in this world,—though  
the very nature of the dispensation bears in it the evidence of a plan

of boundless extent, of infinite grandeur, and of unsearchable wisdom. And, oh! how magnificent, then, must be the view which shall be expanded before the spirits of those who shall have escaped from the darkness and mystery of time, and who shall in thy light see clearly!

My continuance in this world has been but for a little,—and all the generations of men are but ‘pilgrims and strangers upon earth.’ But thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. When, therefore, the short-lived events of time have passed, I humbly hope to enter on scenes which shall be as enduring as they are glorious,—and which shall for ever open in increasing splendor on the souls that have been made perfect.

Many mysteries have seemed to mar the beauty of thy dispensations as we now behold them,—but though now I have seen through a glass darkly, then shall I see face to face,—all thy ways shall be justified,—and wisdom and goodness, of infinite length, and depth, and breadth, shall appear to have guided every thing that thou hast done.

I go not to the dead but to the living,—to the good and wise of all ages,—to Jesus, the Mediator between God and man,—to the com-

pany of the Apostles, and Martyrs, and just men made perfect,—to the countless myriads of the intelligent servants of God. These are not dead but alive; and shall I soon, O my God, shall I, indeed, soon be one of them?

Why, then, should I fear to die? why should I not rather rejoice with a 'joy unspeakable and full of glory?'

O make me strong in faith, and help me to prepare myself for the struggle that is to break my connexion with this world, in an exulting belief that the utmost sufferings of the present life, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is to be revealed. For Christ's sake. Amen.

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## XV.

FOR PARDON OF ANY ERRORS IN OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEF, OR IN OUR GROUNDS OF TRUST.

Mark ix. 24. *Help thou mine unbelief.*

Thou knowest, O God, that not only is man weak in ability to do good, but apt also to entertain many errors, even when he thinks that he is judging rightly, and that it is not in the power even of the wisest of mankind to form per-

fectly correct conceptions of thy nature, or of the principles of thine administration.

‘Now we see through a glass darkly,’ and ‘every man liveth in a vain show.’

If then, O God, my religious views be in any respect erroneous in thy sight, O pardon mine errors, and enlighten me clearly in the things that belong to my peace.

If I have not properly apprehended the true grounds of a sinful creature’s trust before thee—show me, O God, the insecurity of my foundation, and deal not severely with my involuntary mistakes.

Let none of my errors be the result of pride, of presumption, or of obstinacy, but grant me the disposition of ‘a little child,’ who is willing to sit down and receive divine wisdom at the feet of him whom thou hast sent.

Keep me from forming *unworthy* ideas of thy nature or dispensations, and, oh! let me never entertain the belief, that thou canst be the enemy of any of thy creatures.

Yet, save me from presumptuous confidence, and while I humbly trust in thy goodness and mercy, as revealed, through Jesus Christ, in thy blessed word, may I also always keep in mind, that thou art a just God and a holy, and that thou executest signal vengeance on those

who presumptuously offend, or who show themselves insensible to great blessings.

In all things, O Lord, pity and forgive my errors, grant me a sincere love of truth, and help me to believe, that where men unwillingly err, thou wilt not be hasty to impute sin.

Enable me, also, to extend to the errors and frailties of my brethren, that forgiveness which I now, for Christ's sake, beg of thee.

In all my attempts to comprehend the truth, or to do thy will, let thy Holy Spirit enlighten and strengthen me,—and by his influence may I finally be presented faultless and blameless before thy presence, with exceeding joy, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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## THINGS TO BE DONE BY THE DYING.

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Isaiah xxxviii. 1. 'Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and and not live.'

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

It is not only necessary that those who are apparently approaching the termination of life should have their understandings enlightened by such views of the character of God, and of their own place and hopes under his administration, as are suited to their awful situation, and conformable to the genius of the christian faith, and that, in the second place, they should be fervent and diligent in the performance of all devout and holy exercises, there are, also, certain *actions* which it is becoming and necessary that they should perform, if they are in such a state of body and of mind, as permits them to *engage in the performance of any deliberate and voluntary actions.*

It has been already hinted, that some of those who are dying cannot be required to attend to such actions, because neither their state of body nor of mind fits them for performing them. Yet, in a great variety of cases, the dying are permitted to look forward to the conclusion of their mortal history with more self-possession, and with the prospect of a longer or shorter time which may still intervene before their last struggle shall come;—and in all such cases, the work of preparation for death is not completed till such of the actions at least, which are now to be enumerated, as are suitable to the circumstances of the dying person, have been punctually and conscientiously performed.

These actions may be classed under the three following heads:

First, Setting right any thing in our affairs that may have gone into derangement, or that may still be put into a better condition.

Secondly, Doing all that we can to be reconciled to those with whom we may have lived at enmity, or preparing ourselves to depart from life in a spirit of forgiveness and of good will to every human being.

Thirdly, Giving a beginning to any schemes that are likely to be beneficial to the world after we are gone;—or at least so bearing our tes-

timony to the value of a good life, that our friends and others who witness our departure, may remember our testimony,—and, so far as our exertions can go, may be influenced by it during their future conduct.

These general classifications may include under each of them one or two distinct particulars, which shall be noticed in their place.



## SECTION I.

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### I.

#### ARRANGING OUR AFFAIRS.

Isaiah xxxviii. 1. *Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die.*

The first duty of the dying, according to the preceding arrangement, is the setting in order any thing in their worldly affairs that may have gone into derangement, or that may still be put into a better condition.

1. Our station in life, with all the duties which belong to it, constitutes in a peculiar sense that *trust* with which our Creator has honored us in this world;—and as, during our years of activity and of health, it should be the first endeavor of every good and upright man to guide his affairs with prudence, and to conduct his labors to a successful issue,—so, even during the last portions of life, it is his duty, in

so far as health of body and of mind permits, still to attempt to remedy any errors he may have committed in the conduct of his affairs, and to give them such an arrangement or direction as may be likely to lead them to a prosperous issue.

And this ought to be *conscientiously* done,—because, as has been already said, life is to every man *a trust*,—or the situation which he occupies in life, with all its duties, be they small or great, is a most important part of *the talent* committed to him, by that Divine Providence which called him into existence,—which arranged all the *circumstances* that characterize his station,—and to which he is finally accountable for his good or bad conduct of the advantages that have been conferred on him,—and every conscientious and wise man, therefore, will be anxious so to manage his affairs in this world, that having thus shown himself to be ‘faithful over a few things, he may hereafter be made the ruler over many things.’

2. It ought also to be especially kept in mind by those who think little of the trust committed to them individually in this life, that no station can be considered as unimportant in the scheme of Divine Providence, a small derangement may in this, as in other things, be followed by con-

sequences of the utmost moment;—and, indeed, so intimately interwoven are all the portions of our conduct, that he who does well in one particular, commonly sees the good effects of his well-doing extending to other things of which he had not thought, and he, in like manner, who fails in one part of the trust committed to him as certainly is made sensible, by the widening influence of his errors, that he is doomed to become the occasion of far greater disasters, both to himself and to others, than he had ventured to anticipate.

In the same manner, the duties of an obscure sphere in life often produce most important results, upon arrangements of apparently far greater magnitude;—and on all these accounts, it is of the greatest importance to every man to be made aware, that however obscure or limited, in his estimation, his peculiar station in life may be, it may have relations to other departments of the divine scheme, which may render it, by these connexions, of the very greatest moment.

3. In short, we are all subjects of the kingdom of God, or have a part in those infinitely good and wise arrangements by means of which he is conducting the affairs of his dominions to their ultimate purpose; and our duty, as good

and true subjects, is to think not so much of what seems to us to be the amount of our trust, as of the manner in which we may execute our part with the most perfect success;—for this is what constitutes us individually *good subjects*, and we may be certain, that we are incapable of judging whether our place in life be ultimately, and in relation to the vast scheme of things, important or otherwise.

From all these considerations, then, it is evident, that a most momentous part of the trust committed to us, as servants of God, during life, is the due management of the worldly circumstances in which Divine Providence has seen fit to station us;—and a becoming and necessary duty to be performed even by those who are about to leave this world, is so to busy themselves in correcting what has been amiss in the management of their affairs, or in giving a new and better direction to existing circumstances, that, even during their last hours, they may give evidence, that they have not altogether been unworthy of a higher trust, in a greater world, by having been negligent or unconscientious servants in that which they are leaving.

It is, however, impossible on this head to give more particular directions, because the situa-

tions of mankind are marked by infinite varieties;—and every person, therefore, must judge for himself what is the duty in this respect, which is peculiarly required of him, or which he can execute with the greatest probability of success.

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## II.

### MAKING A TESTAMENT.

Isaiah xxxviii. 1. *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die.*

Under the general title of setting our house in order, may be considered, in the second place, the making a testament, or will.

This, indeed, is a duty which is best done while we are in health;—because, in the first place, it can then be done with most mature consideration, and with a regard to all the circumstances, that, in so important a transaction, ought to enter into our view. When once done, it may afterwards receive such alterations or amendments as the progress of our affairs may render necessary.

In the second place, an important reason for making a will while we are in health may be,

derived from the beneficial effect which the performance of so solemn an act is likely to have upon our own minds. By executing a will, attachment to worldly things is shaken. 'I have determined whose all these things shall be; but what is my portion? My heart and strength fail,—but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

A third reason for making a will while we are in health, is founded on the consideration, that the law of the land requires, in order to give validity to such a deed, sufficient evidence of health and strength after it has been made,—or, at least, of time sufficient for due deliberation;—and no man can be certain, if he defers the performance of this work to a death-bed, that he shall be in a condition to comply with these requisitions.

Still, many of those who see death evidently approaching are in a condition to make a will, to which the law of the land will give effect;—and the consideration of the many great and long continued evils which may result from deferring or altogether neglecting this duty, ought to weigh with all such persons in leading them to an instant discharge of it, while its performance is yet in their power.

Now, in order that a will may be properly

made, the three following things ought to characterize it:

In the first place, it ought to be construed according to the strictest and most binding legal forms; so that there may be no possibility of its provisions being evaded and quarrels generated, by any supposition, on the part of survivors, that it has not been executed in a strictly legal form.

In the second place, the person making the testament ought to divest his mind of any becoming partialities which, during any previous periods of his life, he may have been inclined to entertain or to act upon. He ought to consider himself as a person about to appear before the Searcher of hearts,—and, so far as human infirmity permits, he ought, with a solemn impression, to act as if he were already in the presence of Him to whom 'all hearts are open, all desires known,' and who cannot look upon sin or injustice of any kind but with abhorrence.

In the third place, all prudent and becoming *circumstances* ought to be taken into consideration,—so that the testament may bear evidence of its having proceeded from a person who not only was actuated by a sense of justice, and a feeling of good intention, but who retained *the prudence and just discernment of mind* which

enabled him to do this important act in the most judicious and effective manner. For this purpose, the advice of a discreet friend may be of use;—but, at any rate, the person who declines to seek such aid, ought to be certain that he has in his view all the particulars which ought to be attended to in an act on which so many opinions are likely to be passed, and from which such important consequences to the peace of his friends are likely to result.

It is a miserable thing for a man to think that, by neglecting any of these precautions, he may be giving occasion to wrath, and contention, and a breaking down of all brotherly kindness, after he is gone, among those who were his intimate and nearly-related friends while he lived,—and that his bad conduct is thus perpetuating its effects, after he himself has ceased to take an active part in any of the things that are done upon the earth.

The man, on the contrary, who is conscious that he has paid a becoming attention to all these circumstances, has also the pleasing thought, that he has done a deed, the good effects of which will be felt after he has ceased to exist among men,—or that, in so far as his conduct has effect, good agreement will be cherished, and the influence of the most *unbecoming of all contentions counteracted.*



By so conducting himself he also procures for his own character a good report after he is gone;—and by the justice and impartiality, and thorough discretion of his conduct, he does honor to the cause of Christ,—if he has professed himself an adherent of that cause, and wished to die as one who had acted under the influence of its kind, and pure, and honorable spirit.

A good testament, it has been said, is one of the rarest of all things;—and every good man ought therefore to be careful that this last act of his connexion with this world should be done in the most exemplary and effective manner.

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## SECTION II.

### I.

#### RECONCILIATION.

*Matthew xviii. 21. Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?—Jesus saith, I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but until seventy times seven.*

The second thing which was mentioned under this classification as proper to be done by

the dying, is the forgiveness of injuries, or doing all that we can to depart from life in a spirit of good-will to every human being.

The expectation of *forgiveness* is, at the moment of death, the most anxious wish that can press upon the human heart;—and we are taught to believe, that we have an earnest of such forgiveness only in so far as we have succeeded in forgiving all those with whom we have had any ground of quarrel.

Our future prospects, also, give a sanction to this duty;—for we are not only about to appear before God, but expect to be united with the great company, among whom there is only peace and a happy rivalry in all good offices to the family of the Creator;—and we cannot be altogether fit for such society, till we are conscious of having divested ourselves of all feelings of enmity to every partaker of that human nature, from our participation in the errors and the sorrows of which we are now hoping to depart.

The three following directions seem to comprise what is requisite to be done by us for fulfilling this duty:—

In the first place, if it be in our power to make a *formal agreement* with our offended

brother, we should anxiously embrace any such opportunity, and even earnestly solicit it.

But, in the second place, there may be cases, and perhaps they are the most numerous, in which, without any formal quarrel having taken place, there have been only secret and occasional feelings of jealousy or ill-will;—and with respect to such disagreements, no formal reconciliation being necessary, or perhaps proper, our spirit of good-will may be best displayed by a zealous performance of such actions as may show the individual with whom we have been at variance, that our hearts are now in all respects reconciled to him.

In the last place, where neither of the former methods of reconciliation is in our power, we should endeavor to divest our own spirits of all feelings of irritation or of hostile remembrance,—and to cherish such a frame of mind as may be an evidence to ourselves, that the peace of God has descended upon our hearts, and that we are about to leave this world, not only without one feeling of enmity to any human being, but in such a state of mind, as is an earnest to us, that we are about to enter into the universal communion of the just made perfect.

## II.

## RESTITUTION.

**Luke xix. 8.** *If I have taken any thing from any man, by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.*

Under the head of reconciliation may also be considered the no less imperious duty of restitution of whatever has been unjustly taken, or reparation of wrongs that have been committed.

Those who hold public situations, or who have had transactions with many persons, are apt, in the course of life, to have been guilty of actions which especially demand this species of reparation;—and happy is the man who, after having filled important public trusts, or having been engaged in many transactions of various kinds, and with many individuals, can yet say, when about to depart from life, that he has in no instance appropriated to himself that which did not belong to him, or done the slightest act of injustice to any of his fellow-men. The following is a beautiful instance of this integrity of conduct, and of the reward that attended it:

*'Samuel said unto all Israel,--I am now old*

and grey-headed, and I have walked you from my childhood until this day. I here I am,—witness against me before the Lord, and before his Anointed. Who have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received a bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and restore it you.' And they said, 'Thou hast not defrauded us nor oppressed us,—hast thou taken aught of any man's? And he said unto them, 'The Lord is witness against you, and his Anointed is witness with me this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand.' And they answered, 'He is witness.'

Although such dangers, however, are commonly incurred by those in high rank, or who have lived amidst much active business, it may happen that an individual in the most private sphere of life, may be conscious that he has on some occasion done wrong to some other individual, or is in possession of advantages which do not in strict justice, belong to himself,—or that there is some action or other which he cannot now to perform, in order to depart from the world with the conviction, that he has rendered all their due, or, at least, done what he could.

to repair any previous wrong of which he may have been guilty.

Now, restitution or reparation, in such circumstances, is a duty of indispensable obligation,—and even all attempts at reconciliation are nugatory and fallacious, till this retributive act of justice has been performed;—and if, therefore, there be any individual from whom we have by any means taken that which did not belong to us, or whose character, or virtue, or comfort or worldly circumstances, we have in any way injured, we have no reason to congratulate ourselves on having done all that we can to leave this world under the most favorable circumstances, till we have zealously and effectively set ourselves to repair, to the utmost of our power, and at any expense of labor or of humiliation, the evil we have committed.

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### SECTION III.

#### I.

##### USEFUL PLANS.

Revelation xiv. 13. *Their works do follow them.*

The last general title under which we proposed to consider the actions proper to be

done by the dying, was that of giving a blessing to such schemes as may be useful to the world after we are gone,—or, at least, soiling our testimony to the value of a good life, that those who witness our departure may be confirmed in their faith, and induced to lead pious and exemplary lives.

Most men have it in their power to do a much greater quantity of good to their fellow-creatures than they actually perform, during their years of health and strength. But the hurry and bustle and thoughtlessness of active life, incline the generality of men for such actions, or prevent them for being aware, that their performance is actually in their power. Even the humblest individual, however, when intent on doing good, can often find abundant means of accomplishing his wishes;—and it is very pleasing to see to what an extent the scantiest means can go, when they are seconded and employed by a zealous spirit.

The termination of life, however, ought to call every man to a sense of the opportunity which during health he may have neglected, and those, especially, who hold a prominent place in life, or who, from their rank and influence, are likely to make a powerful impression *on those* around them, ought carefully to con-

er, what they can now do, that the welfare of the world may be promoted after they have left it,—or that the interests of piety and virtue may be advanced among men.

Schemes tending directly to the *temporal good* of mankind ought not to be overlooked;—for the *kingdom* of God is advanced by every thing that better the condition of his creatures, or that even beautifies the face of that world in which existence has been assigned us;—and there are many individuals of rank and influence, to whose habits and opportunities the promotion of such schemes is peculiarly appropriate. Such persons leave a valuable legacy to the world, and have an earnest, in their endeavors to be useful, that they shall not be considered as altogether unfitted for a higher trust in that greater state on which they are about to enter.

The interests of *piety* and *virtue*, however, are fitted especially to press themselves on the notice of the dying, who feel how much their own welfare or failure in life has been owing to the influence or to the absence of those qualities in themselves;—and it is a becoming act, on the part of the dying, to busy themselves in giving a commencement to any plans, by the progress of which these qualities may be promoted.

It is only necessary to observe further, under



this head, that though these recommendations are particularly applicable to those who have wealth or influence, there are few so humble in their sphere as to be altogether precluded from their application. But the particular manner in which this kind of good deeds is to be done, must in every case be left to the discretion of those who are in a condition to perform them.

Being instrumental in establishing an industrious and virtuous family in the world, or providing for the maintenance and education of a well-disposed child, may often be giving a beginning to a scheme of usefulness which shall extend its influence much farther than any human imagination was capable of foreseeing.

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## II.

### PARTING ADVICES.

Genesis xviii. 19. *I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.*

The second article of duty noticed under the general title of this section, was that of bearing testimony to the value of a good life, and to the truth of the grand principles of religious belief.

The last words of those who have been well known to us in life are seldom forgotten or entirely useless to survivors;—and if they have been the last words of persons eminent for their rank or influence, or for any other excellence, they are likely to make a peculiarly profound impression on the minds of those who have heard them.

The Scriptures, accordingly, which are intended to teach us not only how to live but to die, are filled with many instructive passages of this kind.

‘Last words, and counsels, and prayers,’ (says an excellent writer,) ‘affect the heart: when proceeding from an eminent benefactor to mankind, they instruct and edify, from age to age. ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,’ were the last words of Jesus:—they are remembered and pondered by his friends in all their generations:—with his words they ascend to his Father and their Father,—to his God and their God.’

‘The Apostle Paul’s reflection on the course he had finished, and his crown laid up, is an interesting view of a Christian’s hope in death, and of the true foundation of that hope.’

‘Parting advices pass from the heart to the heart,—and Peter’s counsels glow with peculi-

ar warmth and tenderness,—‘Knowing shortly I must put off this tabernacle, ( as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed moreover I will endeavor that you may be after my decease, to have these things alv in remembrance.’

‘The last blessings of the patriarchs are corded, not only as prophecies, but as exp sions of devout affection, and of their fait the efficacy of prayer. Though *we* ca reach the fame and the influence of Apo and Prophets, yet it seldom falls to the lot Christian to die unlamented;—there are, the most part, some to whom his memo dear, and by whom his last words will be a tionately remembered.’

—‘They who have wealth must bestow attention necessary to dispose of it aright, still greater attention is due to piety;— who have no wealth, can bestow their w attention on spiritual concerns. With re to these, three things should be aimed at: to learn an example of resignation and f secondly, to give suitable parting advi thirdly, to make intercessions with God. T are instances, both among the rich and poor, of exemplary attention to these thi *I have seen an account of the death-bed c*

whose nobility may recommend her pattern to the great, and perhaps remind them, that piety alone ennobles in a dying hour.' 'She expressed gratitude, submission, and love to her Creator,—the greatest confidence in the merits of her Redeemer, and in their efficacy for her salvation,—and the strongest assurance that her faith, her attachment to her duty, her charity to the world, her love and attention to the poor, and the truth and innocence of her heart, were approved of by God.' After addressing the several members of her family, she comforted them all with those comforts wherewith she herself was comforted of God. 'I have no anxiety about you or myself,—I lived happy, and I die contented;—nor let this surprise you,—it is the genuine effect of the impression I have constantly preserved on my soul, of the goodness and omnipresence of God. This not only supports me, it cheers me, it animates me with the most lively hope for myself and for you. Let this, therefore, convince you of the power of true religion. Cultivate piety. It will smooth your passage through life, and make your departure pleasant as mine is.'

'When a mother is taken from young children, and from the husband of her youth, they stand in need of comfort,—and the highest

comfort flows from the remembrance of her piety and virtue. If, while the mourner indulges his sorrow by reviewing the history of a life dear as his own, the christian temper appears throughout sustained and adorned;—if the days of her youth were marked by unwearied attention to aged parents;—if the duties of every future relation were studied and fulfilled;—if a principle of obedience to God, cherished by devotion, pervaded her conduct;—if she attended to worldly cares but with no anxious solicitude, and welcomed human comforts with no high emotion, and saw them retire without much regret, still preferring the humblest duties to the most favorite enjoyments;—if no unkindness ever harbored in her breast, and no angry passion ever troubled it, and that perfection was almost attained which offends not a word;—if, in every trial, the power of religion prevailed;—and if, in the last trial, while under a disease at which nature shrinks, and which baffled all the powers of medicine, she could possess her soul in patience;—if the remembrance of a well spent life yielded consolation to her parting spirit;—if she left to her children the efficacy of all her prayers, and the memory of all her virtues, a sacred legacy;—if this *with the remembrance of a departed friend*

The remembrance of exalted virtue mingles, the mourners hear as it were a voice behind them, 'This is the way, walk ye in it;'—a voice from on high, 'Come up hither.'

'The mind does not always decay with the body;—the inward man is often renewed and strengthened, as the outward man decays. A *peculiar energy* is exerted at times by the parting spirit; and I have heard, from a death-bed, the tongue of the stammerer speak plain, and the lips of the unlearned utter excellent things; solemn charges from a dying mother to her daughters, in the humblest sphere of life,—charges to be honest, and to work for their bread,—to be content, and to go into none of the ways of pride,—to be modest and humble,—to be God's children,—and to God she commended them in prayer. This was a poor widow's legacy to her children; it was a legacy of value; for it is no delusion, that the seed of the godly are heirs of promise, that the efficacy of prayer descends, and that the children of the righteous are in circumstances far more favorable to virtue than the children of the wicked.'

'Some parents, aware of uncertainty as to the time and manner of their death, have sealed up written counsels to be opened after their *decease* by their children; and some have, in the

same way, made a last address to their friends;—this method has all the advantages formerly mentioned, of making a testament while in health,—and it has the advantage of serving as a sacred deposit, to be recurred to at times, after the traces left by a last interview on the imagination and heart are passed away.’

‘Some spiritual fathers have by their writings perpetuated their instructions. A faithful pastor, speaking for the last time, and speaking from the tomb, is heard with serious, awful attention.’

‘Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained praise.’ With words of comfort they have at times assuaged the grief of parents, have looked forward to the resurrection of the body with a lively faith, have anticipated communion with angels and saints, and in the full assurance of walking with Jesus in white raiment, with palms in their hands, and a new song in their mouths, and everlasting joy on their heads, have passed in patience through great tribulation. From their own experience of comfort in death, they have earnestly recommended religion,—and this was *their legacy* to surviving friends. By this means parents who minded religion too little have been awakened to serious thought,—be

eving parents have had their faith increased, —and the young have been led to early piety.’

To these interesting remarks, but one concluding observation will be added.

Even when the tongue can no longer utter words of faith, or express recommendations to duty,—when the last struggle is about to commence,—and a final farewell to be taken of every thing on earth, something may occasionally still be done by those whose minds are anxious to be useful, for the future edification and comfort of those who witness their departure;—and a good man may, even at that awful moment, show himself to be under the influence of that divine love to men, which is the most excellent of all gifts, and the surest pledge of his preparation for the ‘communion of the just made perfect.’ In the manner in which he prepares himself for the last struggle, he may evince the desire which he feels that he may pass through it so as to leave a good impression on the minds of his friends;—even ‘a composed look,’ when nothing else can be expressed, may often convey a meaning which can neither be misunderstood nor forgotten;—and as charity is the greatest of all gifts, a good man cannot close his life better than by *an act of that grace, which will accompany his spirit into eternity.* Amen.



# SERIOUS ADVICE

TO A

PERSON RECOVERED FROM SICKNESS.

ABRIDGED AND ALTERED FROM BISHOP GIBSON!

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Since it hath pleased God to recover you from late sickness, and to grant you a longer continuance in this world, I hope one of the first things in your thoughts is to reflect upon the condition you have been in; which could not be so well able to do, under the pains and labours of a sick bed. And as I doubt not but you are naturally disposed to consideration, especially after a warning of mortality as you have had, so I assure me that you will esteem it an act of true friendship in me, to offer you my assistance therein; having no other intent in doing it, but to confirm the good dispositions which the prospect of the grave hath raised and improved, but which the prospect of life will be apt to destroy again, unless they be renewed upon the mind by serious consideration on your

I. The first step then towards our reaping benefit from sickness, is to consider it not so much in the natural, but in the religious sense; not as it takes away our strength and spirits, and so disables us for the business of this world; but as it is a nearer view of death, and a sensible proof of the frailty of our nature, and therefore a reasonable warning to be in a constant preparation for our end. In like manner, the pains and agonies

feel in the time of sickness are not to be considered barely as an uneasiness to the body, but more especially as a lesson to the soul, to make it less fond of continuing in this painful state, and more willing to be removed whenever it shall please God to call. Nor is the time of the continuance of sickness to be reflected on as so much lost from the business or pleasures of life, but rather as a check that God gives to our worldly pursuits, in order to make way for thoughts and considerations of a heavenly nature.

II. For, as in all the other dispensations of life, so particularly in this of sickness, you must have your eye chiefly upon God, or else you will never make a right judgment, nor a right use of it. If you look no further than the body, or to what cause or accident the indisposition was immediately owing, the effects will reach no farther than the body; nor will your sickness work any other care or concern in you, than how to remove the cause, and avoid the accident for the time to come. But certainly, the benefit that God designs by it must be of a spiritual nature, for the good of the soul: and since the first foundation of the good that sickness works is the bringing us to a serious consideration of our future state; this shows us, that the bed of sickness must not be forgotten, nor the thoughts of it laid aside, as soon as we are restored to our bodily health and strength; that is rather the proper time of setting ourselves regularly and effectually, when our bodily pains are removed or abated, and God hath set the terrors of death at a greater distance from us, and so our minds are at liberty to reflect with due attention and deliberation.

III. Look back upon your former life, and you may find, that till then you had been supine and lukewarm in religion, and did want to be awakened out of that spiritual sleep into a sense of your duty; that you encouraged

yourself in *sin*, by setting death and a future from you; and therefore needed to be roused to security by a nearer view and apprehension of the ease and health had betrayed you into too greatness for the delights and interests of this world was necessary that your enjoyment should be ended, and that you should be taught the folly of setting your heart on this world by being reminded of the uncertainty of your continuance in it.

These and the like reflections upon the follies and sins of your former state, will show you the goodness and mercy of God in the sickness with which you were visited; and the sense of God's goodness herein convince you, that the chastisements you have received are the chastisements of a tender father, to whose will therefore listen and submit with all humility and thankfulness, saying, as David did in the like case, (Ps. 75.) 'I know, O Lord, that thou of very faithful chastisement caused me to be troubled;' and ver. 71, 'It is my lot that I have been afflicted, that I might learn righteousness.'

IV. When you have duly reflected what the state of your soul was before the time of sickness, and how you were yourself sensible of the goodness of God in the chastisement you have endured, go on and consider seriously how your condition would have been if this sickness had ended your last? How your accounts stood with God if your preparation you had been in to meet death? Would you not have found you going on in some kind of security or indulging yourself overmuch in the pleasures and enjoyments of life? Whether you had in any measure applied yourself to the study and practice of God's word and lived in a due regard to the holy ordinances of preaching, and the blessed sacrament? In short, seriously, whether, before sickness came, you

ought too little of another life, and whether death, if it then come, would not have been a very great surprise to you? And if upon this inquiry into the frame of your mind before sickness, you see that it had found you in a cold or lukewarm, that is, in an unprepared state, the knowledge of this should oblige you to employ all the powers of your body and soul, in praising and blessing God for his unsearchable mercy and goodness in sparing you, and should serve to be a warning never to run such a desperate hazard again, but to set yourself seriously to think of death, and not to be at ease in your mind, till you find you are prepared for it; that so (as our Saviour speaks) 'whenever the Lord comes, you may be sure to be found watching.' Next to the divine goodness, first in your sickness, and in delivering you from death; remember what your thoughts and resolutions were, while you lay upon your sick bed.

Would you not think it great folly, to have let so much time pass away with so little preparation for your future life? Now God hath given you more time, let it be your care to employ it more wisely.

Would you not wish, over and over, that heaven, and the happiness thereof, had been your chief care? Why then, let it amend for former neglects, by your future diligence in the work of your salvation.

Would you not have been content to give all the world had been your's, for a little space to consider better, and to make your peace with God. Now a longer space is granted you, forget not how valuable you thought it, but let it be a real blessing to you, by improving it to the end which you so earnestly wished and prayed for it.

Would you not make repeated promises and resolutions, *if it should please God to prolong your life, you will live to him, and serve him faithfully and sincerely the rest of your days?* You see, God hath granted you what you

desired, and now he expects that you perform what promised. 'When thou vowest a vow unto God, (the wise man, Eccl. v. 4,) defer not to pay it.' *Es* promise and resolution you made in your sickness was the nature of a solemn vow to God; and the sincerity that vow depends not so much upon your intentions when you were sick, as upon your performances now you are well. If you had died, none but God could have judged of your sincerity: but now you live, if you forget your vow, this will be a plain and open declaration, that it is only the effect of the fears and terrors of death; that you are one of those perverse and untractable children, who will be no longer good, than they see the rod brought over them. But I am persuaded better things of you, and do heartily hope, that your late promises and resolutions are fresh in your memory, and that you are not in haste to ease your mind of whatever burden you laid upon it in the time of your sickness; that is, in few words that you are now doing whatever you then wished to have been done.

VI. Particularly, if your conscience did then charge you with any act of injustice, delay not to make reparation to the utmost of your power; if your sickness found you in a state of enmity with any person, do your part towards a speedy reconciliation; if you had not then settled your worldly concerns, defer not to settle them now in such a manner as may best preserve peace among those you leave behind, whenever it shall please God to take you away; if you found great comfort of mind in being ministered by the minister and other good christians in part of God, now you are released from your confinement, and enjoy the same comfort in a serious and diligent attendance on the worship of the church; if, in the condition of body and mind, you desired to be partaker of the blessed sacrament, and found yourself gratified

you had not frequented it more in the time of your health; you see it hath pleased God to restore your health, and therewith an ability of considering and preparing yourself; fail not therefore to come to the Lord's table, during the remainder of your life. In short, recollect diligently what were the sins, failings, and neglects, that you then found yourself most sensibly grieved and concerned at, and let it be your first and immediate care to set these right, assuring yourself, that the condition of your soul is really such as you saw it in the time of your sickness, and esteeming it the greatest blessing of your recovery, that it gives you time and opportunity to clear the guilt of your former life, and to prepare for your future account, by a speedy course of repentance and amendment.

VI. There are many things concur, in the time of sickness, to raise good resolutions in the hearts of men; as the thoughts of present death, the immediate prospect of a future state, and all unfitness of body and mind to attend the cares or relish the pleasure of this world. But when health returns, these motives to seriousness do not only cease, but are succeeded by motives to lukewarmness and forgetfulness; as, the hopes of long life, the distance of a future account, and a delight in the business and entertainments of the world. It is therefore necessary, now you are restored to health, to be warned of these temptations, in order to be prepared against them; considering yourself not as discharged, but only reprieved from death; and that as God granted the reprieve, so none but God can tell how long or short it is to be; that the preparation for your future account is not the work of a dying bed, but the business of your whole life; and the more of life is spent, the more diligently are you concerned to attend this work. That He who is training you up for a future state, *cannot be supposed to have prolonged your life, only that you may have the pleasure to eat and drink so many days,*

and sleep so many nights longer in this world; but to give you the opportunity of approving yourself to him, and preparing yourself for heaven, by a steadfast course of obedience and devotion.

VIII. Take therefore this merciful warning that God has given you, and improve it diligently to the purposes intended; remembering that it will be a proportionable aggravation of your guilt, if you resist these gracious endeavors for the salvation of your soul, and give no proofs of your growing better under his hand. Consider also, that this may be the last warning, with time for repentance and amendment, that he will give, and that your next sickness may end in death, or (which is worse) death may seize you on a sudden, without any warning at all.

Do not then trifle with God; but while he gives you opportunity, be wise unto salvation. Is God so greatly concerned for you, and will you have no concern for yourself? When you see him thus laboring, both in the way of mercy and judgment, for the salvation of your soul, how can you resist so much goodness? You have already been under the hand of God in your late sickness, and what you have hitherto felt has been the chastisement of a tender Father, and, if you will be wise, it may be improved into the greatest blessing he could have sent; but if you will not listen to his correction, you do in effect defy him, and cast him off.

IX. I write not this, as if I thought you had forgot your late sickness, or had been chastised and visited in vain; but being sincerely desirous of your spiritual welfare, I omit no argument, either of love or fear, mercy or judgment, that may help to cherish and keep alive the *good thoughts* and resolutions which your late sickness hath raised in you. These, for aught you can yet tell, were *only the effects of the fears and terrors you were under.*

Now is the time to make it appear, that you meant in earnest, and that they are your settled choice and sentiment; which, I hope, is what you have not only resolved to do, but what you are now doing, in a just sense of the uncertainty of life, and of the happiness of being thus in a preparation for death. And that God will be pleased to give you grace and strength to persevere in good resolutions, and to continue steadfast in the path that leads to eternal life, is the hearty prayer of  
*Your affectionate PASTOR.*

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#### THANKSGIVING AFTER A RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

Most gracious and merciful God, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death, I, thy unworthy servant, who raised again from the bed of sickness, do here present myself before thee, in a thankful sense of thy great mercy and goodness towards me. Blessed be thy holy name, supporting me under the pain and anguish of my sickness for the seasonable supplies of patience and comfort, which thou didst graciously afford me, and for restoring me in thy good time, to the blessings of health and strength.\*

But I know, O Lord, that this pain and weakness were permitted to improve my soul, to teach me the frailty of my nature, and the uncertainty of my life; to wean me from the delights of this world and to engage me in a serious preparation for the next: in all which I thankfully ac-

When any person during the time of sickness, hath been light headed, he or she may add, [and to the purpose of my reason and understanding.]



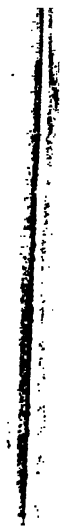
knowledge thy fatherly care over me, and that thou of very faithfulness hast afflicted me.

To thee, therefore, O my God, who hast not cut me off in the midst of my sins, but hast in great mercy given me space for repentance and amendment, to thee will I live in holiness and righteousness, all my days; forsaking every evil way, and studying above all things to do that which is well pleasing in thy sight. I am heartily grieved at the sins and vanities of my former life, and do here solemnly renounce them all. And in a sense of my own weakness and frailty, I earnestly implore the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to subdue my inordinate desires, and break the power of all evil habits, and to keep me steadfast in every promise and resolution that I made before thee, in the day of my distress: all which I do now, in thy presence, most sincerely and heartily renew. And I beseech thee, let me never be drawn to forget or neglect them, either by the cares and pleasures of this world, or by the hopes of a long continuance in it, but give me grace always to make eternity my chief care and concern, and let the late gracious warning of mortality teach me the uncertainty of my abode upon earth, and oblige me to live in a daily preparation to die. That so having duly profited by thy fatherly chastisement, and employing the remainder of my days to thy glory, and the salvation of my own soul, I may be found watching, whenever my appointed time shall come, and may change this frail state of mortality for an immortal crown of glory. All which I humbly beg of thee, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.



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